

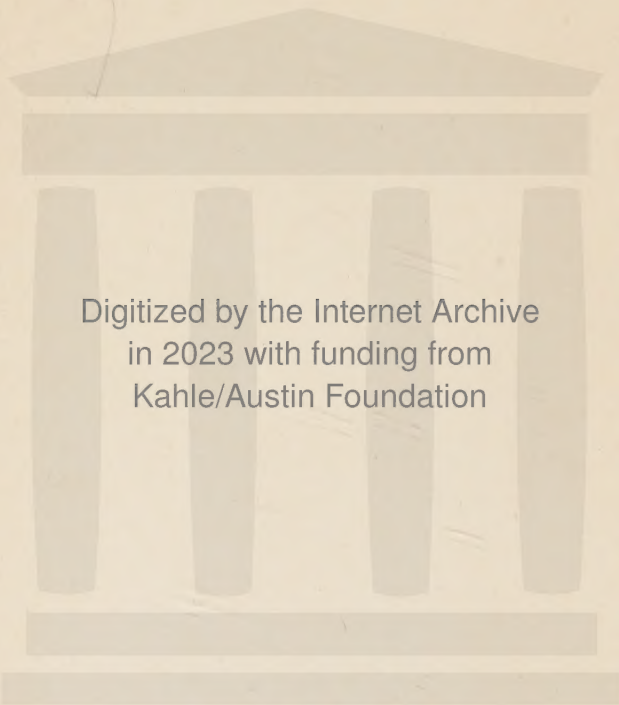
THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

VICENTE BLASCO IBÁÑEZ

Library

St. Olaf College

Northfield, Minn.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2023 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA



When the swordsman clasped her hand she looked into his eyes. "Don't go—come; come!"

[Chapter III]

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

BY
VICENTE BLASCO IBÁÑEZ

FROM THE SPANISH, BY FRANCES DOUGLAS

ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR BY TROY
AND MARGARET WEST KINNEY



CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
1911

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
LIBRARY

PQ6603
L2522
1911

Copyright

A. C. McCLURG & CO.

1911

Published November, 1911

Entered at Stationers' Hall, London

RECEIVED
AT THE
LIBRARY OF THE
UNITED STATES
NAVY

W. H. Hall Printing Company
Chicago

CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I The Hero and the Public	9
II The Matador and the Lady	33
III Born for the Bull-ring	64
IV At Carmen's Window-grille	80
V The Lure of Golden Hair	106
VI The Voice of the Siren	126
VII The Spanish Wild Beast	153
VIII Diamonds in the Ring	178
IX Breakfast with the Bandit	195
X A Look into the Face of Death	228
XI Doctor Ruiz on Tauromachy	256
XII Airing the Saints	269
XIII The Mastery of Self-preservation	288
XIV The Spanish Lilith	307
XV Behind the Scenes	328
XVI "The Greatest Man in the World"	348
XVII The Atonement of Blood	362

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
When the swordsman clasped her hand she looked into his eyes. "Don't go — come; come!" . <i>Frontispiece</i>	
Gallardo's wedding was a national event. Far into the night guitars strummed with melancholy plaint. . . . Girls, their arms held high, beat the marble floor with their little feet	56
"For me?" asked the bandit in tones of surprise and wonder. "For me, Señora Marquesa?" . . .	224
The animal moved in confusion between the red cloths, drawing him far away from the swords- man	294

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

CHAPTER I

THE HERO AND THE PUBLIC

JUAN GALLARDO breakfasted early, as he did whenever there was to be a bull-fight. A slice of roast meat was his only dish. Wine he did not even touch; the bottle remained unopened before him. He must keep himself calm. He drank two cups of thick, black coffee, and lighted an enormous cigar, sitting with his elbows on the table and his chin in his hands, looking with dreamy eyes at the guests who one by one filled the dining-room.

It was a number of years ago, not long after he had been given "the alternative" in the bull-ring of Madrid, that he came to lodge at a certain hotel on Alcalá Street where his hosts treated him as if he were one of the family, and the dining-room servants, porters, scullions, and old waiters adored him as the glory of the establishment. There, too, he had spent many days wrapped in bandages, in a dense atmosphere heavy with the smell of iodoform, in consequence of two gorings, but the unhappy recollection did not weigh upon him.

In his Southern superstitious mind, exposed to con-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

tinual danger, he regarded this hotel as a charmed shelter, and thought that nothing ill would happen to him while living in it; accidents common to the profession, rents in his clothing, scratches in his flesh perhaps, but no last and final fall after the manner of other comrades, the recollection of whom haunted even his happier hours.

On the days of the great bull-fights, after the early breakfast, he enjoyed sitting in the dining-room contemplating the movement of travellers. They were foreigners, or people from distant provinces, who passed near with indifferent countenances, and without looking at him; and then became curious on learning from the servants that the fine youth with shaven face and black eyes, dressed like a young gentleman, was Juan Gallardo, by all familiarly called Gallardo, the famous bull-fighter. Thus were whiled away the long and painful hours before going to the plaza.

These moments of uncertainty, in which vague fears emerged from the depths of his soul, making him doubt himself, were the bitterest in his professional experience. He would not go out on the street thinking of the strain of the contest, and of the need of keeping himself rested and agile; and he could not entertain himself at the table on account of the necessity of eating a light meal, in order to reach the ring without disturbance of his digestion.

He remained at the head of the table, his face between his hands and a cloud of perfumed smoke before his eyes, turning his gaze from time to time with a certain fatuousness to look at some ladies who were contemplating the famous bull-fighter with interest.

THE HERO AND THE PUBLIC

His pride as the idol of the masses made him feel that he could divine eulogy and flattery in these looks. They thought him smart and elegant. And, with the instinct of all men accustomed to pose before the public, forgetting his preoccupation, he sat erect, knocked off with his finger nails the cigar ashes fallen on his sleeves, and arranged his ring, which covered the whole joint of one of his fingers with an enormous diamond surrounded by a nimbus of colors as if its clear liquid depths burned with magic fire.

His eyes roved with satisfaction over his person, admiring the suit of elegant cut, the cap which he wore around the hotel lying on a nearby chair, the fine gold chain that crossed the upper part of his vest from pocket to pocket, the pearl in his cravat that seemed to illuminate the brown tone of his countenance with milky light, and the shoes of Russia leather showing between their tops and the edge of the rolled-up trousers socks of open-work silk embroidered like the stockings of a *cocolle*.

An atmosphere of English perfumes, mild and vague, but used with profusion, arose from his clothing and from his black and brilliant hair. This he brushed carefully down over his temples, adopting a style certain to attract feminine curiosity. For a bull-fighter the ensemble was not bad; he felt satisfied with his appearance. Where was there another more distinguished, or one who had a better way with women?

But suddenly his preoccupation returned, the brilliancy of his eyes clouded, and he rested his chin in his hands again, puffing at his cigar tenaciously, his gaze lost in the cloud of smoke. He thought wistfully of the hour of nightfall, wishing it already here; of the return from the

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

bull-ring, sweaty and tired, but with the joy of danger conquered, the appetites awakened, a mad desire for sport, and the certainty of a few days of safety and rest.

If God would protect him as heretofore he was going to feast with the appetite of his days of poverty and starvation, get a little drunk, and go in search of a certain girl who sang in a music-hall, whom he had seen on his last trip without having a chance to cultivate her acquaintance. Leading this life of continual change from one end of the Peninsula to the other he did not have time for much in the way of pleasure.

Enthusiastic friends who wished to see the swordsman before going to breakfast at their homes began entering the dining-room. They were old admirers anxious to figure in a *banderia* and to have an idol; they had made the young Gallardo the *matador* of their choice, and they gave him sage counsel, frequently recalling their old-time adoration for Lagartijo or Frascuelo.

In addressing Gallardo they called him *thou*, with gracious familiarity, while he put *don* before their names with the traditional class distinction that still exists between the bull-fighter risen from the social subsoil and his admirers. These men linked their enthusiasm with memories of the past to make the young *matador* feel their superiority of years and experience. They talked of the old plaza of Madrid where only bulls that *were* bulls and bull-fighters that *were* bull-fighters were recognized. Coming down to the present, they trembled with emotion on mentioning the Negro, Frascuelo.

"If thou hadst seen him! But thou and those of thy time were at the breast then, or were not even born."

Other enthusiasts began entering the dining-room,

THE HERO AND THE PUBLIC

poorly clad and hungry-looking; obscure newspaper reporters; and men of problematical profession who appeared as soon as the news of Gallardo's arrival was circulated, besieging him with praises and petitions for tickets. Common enthusiasm jostled them against great merchants or public functionaries, who discussed bull-fighting affairs with them warmly, regardless of their beggarly aspect.

All, on seeing the swordsman, embraced him or shook his hand with an accompaniment of questions and exclamations.

"Juanillo — how goes it with Carmen?"

"Well, thanks."

"And how is your mother, Señora Angustias?"

"Fine, thanks. She's at La Rincona'."

"And your sister and your little nephews?"

"As usual, thanks."

"And that good-for-nothing brother-in-law of yours, how is he?"

"He's all right — as much of a gabbler as ever."

"Are there any additions to the family? Any expectations?"

"No — not even that."

He made a fingernail crackle between his teeth with a strong negative expression and then began returning the questions to the new arrivals, of whose life he knew nothing beyond their inclination for the art of bull-fighting.

"And how is your family — all right? Well, glad to hear it. Sit down and have something."

Then he inquired about the condition of the bulls that were to be fought within a few hours, for all these friends

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

had come from the plaza and from seeing the separation and penning in of the animals; and, with professional curiosity, he asked news of the *Café Inglés*, a favorite gathering place of bull-fight fans.

It was the first bull-fight of the spring season, and Gallardo's enthusiasts showed great hopes, remembering the glowing accounts in the newspapers of his recent triumphs in other towns of Spain. He was the bull-fighter who had the most contracts. Since the *Easter corrida* in Seville (the first important one of the taurine year) Gallardo had gone from plaza to plaza killing bulls.

When August and September came, he would have to spend his nights on the train and his afternoons in the rings, without time to rest. His agent at Seville was almost crazy, so besieged was he by letters and telegrams, not knowing how to harmonize so many petitions for contracts with the exigencies of time. The afternoon before he had fought at Ciudad Real and, still dressed in his spangled costume, he had boarded the train to reach Madrid by morning. He had spent a wakeful night, only napping occasionally, crouched in the portion of a seat left him by the other passengers who crowded close together to give some chance for rest to this man who was to expose his life on the morrow, and was to afford them the joy of a tragic emotion without danger to themselves.

The enthusiasts admired his physical endurance, and the rash daring with which he threw himself upon the bulls at the moment of killing.

"We will see what thou art going to do this afternoon," they said with the fervor of true believers. "The devotees expect a great deal of thee. Thou wilt win

THE HERO AND THE PUBLIC

many favors, surely. We shall see if thou dost as well as at Seville."

His admirers now began to disperse to go home to breakfast so as to be able to reach the bull-fight at an early hour. Gallardo, finding himself alone, was preparing to retire to his room, impelled by the nervous restlessness that dominated him. A man, leading two children by the hand, passed through the doorway of the dining-room, paying no attention to the questions of the servants. He smiled seraphically on seeing the bull-fighter, and advanced, dragging the little boys, his eyes glued upon him, taking no thought as to his feet. Gallardo recognized him.

"How are you, Godfather?"

And then followed the customary questions regarding the health of the family. The man turned to his sons, saying gravely:

"There he is! Are ye not continually asking me about him? Just like he is in the pictures."

The two little fellows reverently contemplated the hero whom they had so often seen in the prints that adorned the rooms of their poor home; he seemed to them a supernatural being whose heroic deeds and riches were their greatest marvel as they began to take notice of the things of this world.

"Juanillo, kiss thy godfather's hand."

The smaller of the two boys dashed his red face, freshly scrubbed by his mother in preparation for this visit, against the swordsman's right hand. Gallardo patted his head absent-mindedly. It was one of the many godchildren he had throughout Spain. His enthusiastic friends obliged him to be godfather in baptism to their children, believing thus to assure them a future.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

To exhibit himself at baptism after baptism was one of the consequences of his glory. This godchild recalled to his memory the hard times when he was at the beginning of his career, and he felt a certain gratitude to the father for the faith he had shown in him in spite of the lack of it in every one else.

"And how is business, *compadre?*" asked Gallardo. "Are things going better?"

The *aficionado* made a wry face. He was living, thanks to his commissions in the barley market, barely living, no more. Gallardo looked compassionately at his mean dress—a poor man's Sunday best.

"You want to see the bull-fight, don't you, *compadre?* Go up to my room and let Garabato give you a ticket. Good-bye, my good fellow. Here, take this to buy yourselves something."

As his godson kissed his right hand again, the bull-fighter handed the boys a couple of *duros* with his left. The father dragged away his offspring with expressions of gratitude, not making it clear in his confusion whether his enthusiasm were for the gift to the children or for the ticket for the *corrida* which the swordsman's servant was about to give him.

Gallardo allowed a few moments to elapse, so that he would not meet the enthusiast and his children again in his room. Then he looked at his watch. One o'clock! How long it was yet before the hour for the bull-fight!

As Gallardo walked out of the dining-room and started toward the stairway a crowd of curiosity-seekers and starvelings hanging around the street door, attracted by the presence of the bull-fighter, rushed in. Pushing

THE HERO AND THE PUBLIC

the servants aside, an irruption of beggars, vagabonds, and newsboys filed into the vestibule.

The imps with their bundles of papers under one arm took off their caps, cheering with lusty familiarity.

“Gallardo! Hurrah for Gallardo!”

The most audacious among them grasped his hand and pressed it firmly and shook it in all directions, anxious to prolong as much as possible this contact with the great man of the people whose picture they had seen in the newspapers. Then they rudely invited their companions to participate in this glory.

“Shake hands with him! He won’t get mad. Why, he ’s all right.”

They almost knelt before the bull-fighter, so great was their respect for him. Other curious ones, with unkempt beards, dressed in old clothes that had once been elegant, moved about the idol in their worn shoes and held their grimy hats out to him, talking to him in low tones, calling him *Don Juan* to differentiate themselves from the enthusiastic and irreverent mob. As they told him of their misery they solicited alms, or more audacious, they begged him, in the name of their devotion to the game, for a ticket for the bull-fight,—with the intention of selling it immediately.

Gallardo defended himself, laughing at this avalanche that pushed and shoved him, the hotel clerks being quite unable to defend him, so awed were they by the respect that popularity inspires. He searched in all his pockets till they were empty, distributing silver-pieces blindly among the greedy, outstretched hands.

“There ’s none left now. The coal ’s all burnt up! Let me alone, pesterers.”

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Pretending to be annoyed by this popularity which really flattered him, he opened a passage for himself by a push with his strong arms and escaped by the stairway, running up the steps with the agility of an athlete, while the servants, no longer restrained by his presence, swept and pushed the crowd toward the street.

Gallardo passed the room occupied by Garabato and saw his servant through the half-opened door bending over valises and boxes getting his costume ready for the bull-fight.

Finding himself alone in his room the pleasant excitement caused by the avalanche of his admirers instantly vanished. The unhappy moments of these bull-fighting days had come, the trepidation of the last hours before going to the plaza. Miura bulls and the public of Madrid! The danger which, when he faced it, seemed to intoxicate him and increase his boldness, caused him bitter anguish now in his solitude, and seemed to him something supernatural, awful, on account of its uncertainty.

He felt crushed, as if suddenly the fatigue of the hideous night before had fallen upon him. He had a desire to lie down and rest on the bed at the other end of the room, when again anxiety over what awaited him, doubtful and mysterious, drove away his drowsiness.

He strode restlessly up and down the room and lighted another Havana by the end of the one he had just consumed.

How would this season which he was about to open in Madrid end for him? What would his enemies say? How would his professional rivals succeed? He had killed many Miuras — well, they were bulls like all the

THE HERO AND THE PUBLIC

others; but he thought of his comrades who had fallen in the ring, almost all of them victims of the animals of that stock. Accursed Miuras! It was for a good reason that he and other swordsmen made out their contracts for a thousand *pesetas* more when they had to fight animals of this herd.

He continued wandering about the room with nervous step. He stopped to contemplate stupidly well-known objects that were a part of his equipment; then he let himself fall into an easy chair as if attacked by sudden weakness. He looked at his watch repeatedly. It was not yet two o'clock. How the time crept!

He wished that, as a stimulant for his nerves, the hour for dressing and going to the ring would come. The people, the noise, the popular curiosity, the desire to show himself calm and happy in the presence of the enthusiastic populace, and above all the very nearness of danger, actual and personal, instantly effaced this anguish of isolation in which the swordsman, without the aid of external excitement, felt something akin to fear.

The need of diverting himself caused him to search in the inside pocket of his waistcoat. He drew out with his pocket-book a little envelope which emitted a mild, sweet perfume. Standing by a window through which the obscure light of an inner courtyard entered, he contemplated the envelope which had been handed him when he arrived at the hotel, admiring the fine and genteel elegance of the characters in which the address was written.

He drew out the sheet of paper, breathing in its indefinable perfume with delight. Ah! people of high birth

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

who have travelled widely,—how they reveal their inimitable superiority, even in the smallest details!

Gallardo, as though he felt that his person preserved the keen stench of the misery of his earlier years, perfumed himself with offensive profusion. His enemies joked about the athletic youth who, by his excessive use of perfumes, gave the lie to his sex. His admirers smiled at this weakness, but very often had to turn away their faces, nauseated by the heavy odors he carried with him.

A whole perfumery shop accompanied him on his travels, and the most effeminate essences anointed his body when he descended into the arena among the dead horses, and foul *débris* characteristic of the place. Certain enthusiastic *cocottes*, whom he had met on a trip to the towns in the south of France, had given him the secret of mixtures and combinations of strange perfumes; but the fragrance of the letter—that was like the person of her who had written it—a mysterious odor, delicate and indefinable, that could not be imitated, that seemed to emanate from her aristocratic body; it was what he called “the odor of a lady”!

He read and re-read the letter with a beaming smile of delight and pride. It was not a great matter; half a dozen lines—a greeting from Seville, wishing him good luck in Madrid; anticipated congratulations for his triumphs. That letter could have gone astray without in the least compromising the woman who wrote it. “Friend Gallardo” at the beginning, in elegant lettering that seemed to tickle the bull-fighter’s eyes, and at the end, “Your friend, Sol”; all in a coldly friendly style, addressing him as *you*, with an amiable tone of

THE HERO AND THE PUBLIC

superiority as though the words were not from equal to equal but had descended mercifully from on high.

The bull-fighter, gazing at the letter with the adoration which a man of the people has for caste, though little versed in reading, could not escape a certain feeling of annoyance, as if he beheld himself patronized.

"That baggage," he murmured. "That woman! No one living can break her pride. Look how she talks to me — *you! you!* — and to me!"

But happy memories brought a satisfied smile to his lips. This frigid style was for letters; these were the customs of a great lady; the precautions of a woman who had travelled over the world. His annoyance changed to admiration.

"What that woman does n't know! And such a cautious creature!"

And in his smile appeared a professional satisfaction, the pride of the tamer who, appreciating the strength of the conquered wild beast, extols his own deed.

While Gallardo was admiring this letter his servant Garabato came and went, bringing clothing and boxes which he left on the bed.

He was a fellow of quiet movements and agile hands, and seemed to take no notice of the presence of the bull-fighter. For some years he had accompanied the *diestro* on all his travels as sword-bearer. He had commenced in Seville at the same time as Gallardo, serving first as *capeador*, but the hard blows were reserved for him, while advancement and glory were for his companion. He was little, dark, and of weak muscles, and a tortuous and poorly united gash scarred with a whitish pot-hook his wrinkled, flaccid oldish face. It was from a thrust of

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

a bull's horn which had left him almost dead in the plaza of a certain town, and to this atrocious wound others were added that disfigured the hidden parts of his body.

By a miracle he escaped with his life from his apprenticeship as a bull-fighter, and the cruellest part of it all was that the people laughed at his misfortunes, taking pleasure in seeing him stamped on and routed by the bulls. Finally his total eclipse took place, and he agreed to be the attendant, the confidential servant, of his old comrade. He was Gallardo's most fervent admirer, although he abused the confidence of intimacy by allowing himself to give advice and to criticise. Had *he* been in his master's skin, *he* would have done better at certain moments. Gallardo's friends found cause for laughter in the frustrated ambitions of the ~~sword-bearer~~, but he paid no attention to their jokes. Renounce the bulls? Never! And so that the memory of his past should not be wholly obliterated he combed his coarse hair in shining locks over his ears and wore on the back of his head the long and sacred great lock of hair, the *coleta* of his youthful days, the professional emblem that distinguished him from common mortals.

When Gallardo was angry with him his fierce passion always threatened this capillary adornment.

"And thou dost wear a *coleta*, shameless one? I'm going to cut that rat's tail off for thee—brazen-face! *Maleta!*"

Garabato received these threats with resignation, but he took his revenge by shutting himself up in the silence of a superior man, answering the joy of the master with shrugs of his shoulders when the latter, on returning

THE HERO AND THE PUBLIC

from the plaza of an afternoon in a happy mood, asked him with infantile satisfaction:

“What didst thou think of it? Did I do well, sure?”

On account of their juvenile comradeship he retained the privilege of saying *thou* to his master. He could not talk to the *maestro* in any other way, but the *thou* was accompanied by a grave gesture and an expression of ingenuous respect. His familiarity was like that of the ancient shield-bearers to the knights of adventure.

From his collar up, including the tail on the back of his head, he was a bull-fighter; the rest of his person resembled a tailor and a valet at the same time. He dressed in a suit of English cloth, a present from the *Señor*, wearing the lapels stuck full of pins, and with several threaded needles on one sleeve. His dry, dark hands possessed a feminine delicacy for handling and arranging things.

When he had placed in order all that was necessary for the master's dressing, he looked over the numerous objects to assure himself that nothing was lacking. Then he planted himself in the middle of the room and without looking at Gallardo, as if he were speaking to himself, he said in a hoarse voice and with a stubborn accent:

“Two o'clock!”

Gallardo lifted his head nervously, as if he had not noticed the presence of his servant until then. He put the letter in his pocket and went to the lower end of the room with a certain hesitancy, as if he wished to delay the moment of dressing.

“Is everything ready?”

But suddenly his pale face colored with violent emo-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

tion. His eyes opened immeasurably wide as if they had just suffered the shock of a frightful surprise.

"What clothes hast thou laid out?"

Garabato pointed to the bed, but before he could speak the anger of the *maestro* fell upon him, loud and terrible.

"Curses on thee! Dost thou know nothing of the affairs of the profession? Thou has just come from hay-making, maybe? Bull-fight in Madrid, with Miura bulls, and thou dost get me out a green costume, the same that poor Manuel el Espartero wore! My bitterest enemy could n't do worse, thou more than shameless one! It seems as if thou wishest to see me killed, *malaje!*"

His anger increased as he considered the enormity of this carelessness, which was like a challenge to ill fortune. To fight in Madrid in a green costume after what had happened! His eyes flashed with hostile fire as if he had just received a traitorous attack; the whites of his eyes grew red, and he seemed about to fall upon poor Garabato with his rough bull-fighter hands.

A discreet knock on the door of the room ended this scene.

"Come in!"

A young man entered, dressed in light clothes, with a red cravat, and carrying a Cordovan *sombrero* in a hand beringed with great brilliants. Gallardo recognized him instantly, with that gift for remembering faces possessed by all who live before the public.

He changed suddenly from anger to smiling amiability as if the visit were a sweet surprise. It was a friend from Bilbao, an enthusiastic admirer, a champion of his glory. That was all he could remember. But his name? He met so many! What could his name be? The only

THE HERO AND THE PUBLIC

thing he knew for certain was that he must address him by *thou*, for an old friendship existed between the two.

"Sit down! What a surprise! When didst thou come? The family well?"

And the admirer sat down with the satisfaction of a devotee who enters the sanctuary of the idol determined not to move until the last instant, gratifying himself by the attention of the bull-fighter's *thou*, and calling him *Juan* at every two words so that furniture, walls, and whoever might pass along the corridor should know of his intimacy with the great man. He had arrived from Bilbao this morning and would return on the following day. He took the trip for no other purpose than to see Gallardo. He had read of his great exploits; the season was beginning well; this afternoon would be fine! He had been at the sorting of the bulls where he had especially noticed a dark beast that would undoubtedly yield great sport in Gallardo's hands.

"What costume shall I get out?" interrupted Garabato, with a voice that seemed even more hoarse with the desire to show himself submissive.

"The red one, the tobacco-colored, the blue — any one thou wishest."

Another knock sounded on the door and a new visitor appeared. It was Doctor Ruiz, the popular physician who for thirty years had been signing the medical certificates of all the injured and treating every bull-fighter that fell wounded in the plaza of Madrid.

Gallardo admired him and regarded him as the highest representative of universal science, although he indulged in good-natured jokes about his kindly disposition and his lack of care in his dress. His admiration was like

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

that of the populace which only recognizes wisdom in a man of ill appearance and oddity of character that makes him different from ordinary mortals.

"He is a saint," Gallardo used to say, "a wise fellow, with wheels in his head, but as good as good bread, and he never has a *peseta*. He gives away all he has and he accepts whatever they choose to give him."

Two grand passions animated the doctor's life, revolution and bulls. A vague and tremendous revolution was to come that would leave in Europe nothing now existing; an anarchistic republic which he did not take the trouble to explain, and as to which he was only clear in his exterminating negations. The bull-fighters talked to him as to a father. He spoke as a familiar to all of them, and no more was needed than to get a telegram from a distant part of the Peninsula, for the good doctor to take the train on the instant to go to treat the horn-wound received by one of his *boys* with no other hope of recompense than whatever they might freely wish to give him.

On seeing Gallardo after a long absence he embraced him, pressing his flabby abdomen against the other's body which seemed made of bronze. Bravo! He thought the *espada* looking better than ever.

"And how is the Republic getting on, doctor? When is it going to happen?" asked Gallardo with an Andalusian drawl. "Nacional says it 's going to come off soon; that it will be here one of these days."

"And what does that matter to thee, rogue? Let poor Nacional alone. The best thing for him to do is to stick in his *banderillas* better. As for thee, the only thing that should interest thee is to keep on killing bulls, like the

THE HERO AND THE PUBLIC

very God himself. A fine afternoon this is going to be. They tell me that the bulls — ”

But here the young man who had seen the sorting of the animals and wished to talk about it, interrupted the doctor to tell of a dark bull that had caught his eye, and from which he expected the greatest prowess. The two men, who had remained silent after bowing to one another, were face to face, and Gallardo thought an introduction necessary. But what was the name of that friend whom he addressed as *thou*? He scratched his head, knitting his eyebrows with an effort at recollection, but his indecision was short.

“Listen! What is thy name? Pardon, thou seest — with meeting so many people — ”

The young man concealed beneath a smile of approbation his disenchantment at seeing himself forgotten by the master, and gave his name. Gallardo on hearing it felt the past come back suddenly to his memory, and made reparation for his forgetfulness by adding after the name, “wealthy miner from Bilbao.” Then he presented the “famous Doctor Ruiz ” and both men, as if they had known one another all their lives, united by the enthusiasm of a common devotion, began to gossip about the bulls of the afternoon.

“Sit down.” Gallardo motioned to a sofa at the end of the room. “You ’ll not be in the way there. Talk and don’t notice me. I am going to dress. I think that, as we ’re all men — ”

And he took off his clothes, remaining in his undergarments.

Seated on a chair in the centre of the archway that divided the little reception room from the sleeping al-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

cove, he gave himself up to the hands of Garabato, who had opened a bag of Russia-leather and was taking out of it an almost feminine *necessaire* for the swordsman's toilet.

In spite of the fact that the latter was carefully shaved he lathered his face again and passed the razor over his cheeks with the skill of one daily accustomed to the task. After washing himself Gallardo returned to his seat. The servant deluged his hair with brilliantine and other perfumes, combing it in curls over his forehead and temples; then he undertook the arrangement of the professional emblem, the sacred *coleta*.

With a certain respect he combed the long lock that crowned the occiput of the *maestro*, braided it and, postponing the completion of the operation, fixed it on the top of his head with two hairpins, leaving its final arrangement until later. Now he must occupy himself with the feet, and he stripped the athlete of his socks, leaving him dressed only in an undershirt and drawers of silk mesh.

Gallardo's strong muscles were outlined beneath this clothing in vigorous protuberances. A hollow in one thigh showed a deep scar where the flesh had disappeared on account of a horn-stab. Signs of old wounds were marked by white spots on the brown skin of his arms. His breast, dark and free from hair, was crossed by two irregular purplish lines, with a round depression, as if it had served as a mould for a coin. But his gladiatorial person exhaled an odor of clean brave flesh, mingled with strong but effeminate perfumes.

Garabato, with an armful of cotton and white bandages, knelt at the swordsman's feet.

"Like the ancient gladiators," said Dr. Ruiz, inter-

THE HERO AND THE PUBLIC

rupting his conversation with the man from Bilbao; "thou hast become a Roman, Juan."

"Age, doctor," answered Gallardo with a certain melancholy. "We all have to grow old. When I used to fight bulls and hunger too, I did n't need this — and I had feet of iron in doing the cape-work."

Garabato introduced little tufts of cotton between his master's toes; then he covered the soles and upper part with a layer of this soft material and, putting on the bandages, began to bind them in tight spirals, as the ancient mummies are enwrapped. To fasten this arrangement he took the threaded needles he wore on one sleeve and carefully sewed the ends of the bandages.

Gallardo stamped on the floor with his compressed feet, which seemed firmer inside their soft swathing. Thus encased they felt strong and agile. The servant then drew on long stockings which reached half way up his leg; they were thick and flexible like leggings — the only defence of the legs under the silk of the fighting dress.

"Be careful about wrinkles. Look out, Garabato, I don't like to wear pockets!"

And he stood up to look at himself in the two panels of the mirror, stooping to pass his hands over his legs and smooth out the wrinkles. Over the white stockings Garabato drew on others of rose-colored silk. Then Gallardo thrust his feet into his low shoes, choosing them from among several pairs that Garabato had put on a trunk, all with white soles and perfectly new.

Now the real task of dressing began. The servant handed him his fighting trousers held by the legs,— tobacco-colored silk with heavy embroideries of gold on

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

their seams. Gallardo put them on and the thick cords with gold tassels that closed the knees, congesting the leg with artificial fulness, hung to his feet.

Gallardo told his servant to tighten them as much as he could, at the same time swelling up the muscles of his legs. This operation was one of the most important. A bull-fighter must wear the *machos* well tightened. And Garabato, with deft speed, converted the dangling cords into little bows.

The master put on the fine batiste shirt which the servant offered him, with gatherings on the bosom, soft and transparent as a feminine garment. Garabato after buttoning it tied the knot of the long cravat that fell in a red line, dividing the bosom until it was lost in the waistband of the trousers.

The most complicated part of the dressing still remained, the *faja*, a band of silk nearly five yards long, that seemed to fill the whole apartment, Garabato managing it with the skill of long practice.

The swordsman walked to the other extreme of the room where his friends were and put one of the ends around his waist.

"Come, be very careful!" he said to his servant. "Make the most of thy little skill."

Slowly turning on his heels he drew near his servant who held one end of the belt, thus winding it around his body in regular curves, giving greater elegance to his waist. Garabato, with rapid movements of his hands, changed the folds of the band of silk. With some turns the belt rolled double, with others wide open, and it all adjusted itself to the bull-fighter's form, smooth as if it were a single piece, without wrinkles or puffs. Gal-

THE HERO AND THE PUBLIC

lardo, scrupulous and fastidious in the arrangement of his person, stopped his progress in the course of the rotatory journey to go back two or three times and improve upon the work.

"It is n't good," he said with ill-humor. "Damn it all! Be careful Garabato."

After many halts Gallardo reached the end with the entire piece of silk wound around his waist. The skilful servant had sewed and put pins and safety pins all over his master's body, converting his clothes into one single piece. To get out of them the bull-fighter would have to resort to scissors and to others' hands. He could not divest himself of a single garment until his return to the hotel, unless the bull should accomplish it for him in the open plaza and they should finish undressing him in the hospital.

Gallardo seated himself again and Garabato went about the business of arranging the queue, taking out the hairpins and adding the *moña*, the black rosette with streamers which recalled the ancient head-dress of early bull-fighting times.

The master, as if he wished to put off the moment of final encasement in the costume, stretched himself, asked Garabato for the cigar that he had left on the little night-table, and demanded the time, thinking that all the clocks were fast.

"It's early yet. The boys have n't come. I don't like to go to the plaza early. It makes a fellow tired to be there waiting!"

A servant of the hotel announced that the carriage with the *cuadrilla* had arrived.

It was time to go. There was no excuse for delaying

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

the moment of setting forth. He put over his belt the gold-embroidered vest and outside of this the jacket, a shining garment with enormous embossments, heavy as armor and resplendent with light as a glowing coal. The silk, color of tobacco, was only visible on the under side of the arms and in two triangles on the back. Almost the entire garment disappeared under the heavy layer of trimmings and gold-embroidered designs forming flowers with colored stones in their corollas. The shoulder pieces were heavy masses of gold embroidery from which fell a fringe of the same metal. The garment was edged with a close fringe that moved at every step. From the golden opening of the pockets the points of two handkerchiefs peeped forth, red like the cravat and the tie.

The cap!

Garabato took out of an oval box with great care the fighting cap, black and shining, with two pendent tassels, like ears of passementerie. Gallardo put it on, taking care that the *coleta* should remain unhidden, hanging symmetrically down his back.

The cape!

Garabato caught up the cape from off a chair, the *capa de gala*, a princely mantle of silk of the same shade as the dress and equally burdened with gold embroidery. Gallardo hung it over one shoulder and looked at himself in the glass, satisfied with his preparations. It was not bad.

"To the plaza!"

His two friends took their farewells hastily and called a cab to follow him. Garabato put under one arm a great bundle of red cloths, from the ends of which peeped the hilts and guards of many swords.

CHAPTER II

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

AS Gallardo descended to the vestibule of the hotel he saw the street filled with a dense and noisy crowd as though some great event had taken place. The buzzing of the multitude outside the door reached his ears. The proprietor and all his family appeared with extended hands as if they would bid him farewell for a long journey.

“Good luck! May all go well with you!”

The servants, forgetting distance at the impulse of enthusiasm and emotion, also held their right hands out to him.

“Good luck, Don Juan!”

And he turned in all directions smiling, regardless of the frightened faces of the ladies of the hotel.

“Thanks, many thanks! See you later.”

He was a different man. From the moment he had hung the glittering cape over one shoulder a persistent smile illuminated his countenance. He was pale, with a sweaty pallor like that of the sick; but he smiled, satisfied to live and to show himself in public, adopting his new pose with the instinctive freedom of one who but needs an incentive to parade before the people.

He swaggered with arrogance, puffing occasionally at the cigar he carried in his left hand. He moved his hips haughtily under his handsome cape and strode with a firm step and with the flippancy of a gay youth.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

"Come, gentlemen, make way! Many thanks; many thanks."

And he tried to preserve his dress from unclean contact as way was made among an ill-clad, enthusiastic crowd which surged against the doors of the hotel. They had no money with which to go to the bull-fight but they took advantage of the opportunity of pressing the hand of the famous Gallardo, or of at least touching his garments.

A coach drawn by four richly caparisoned mules with tassels and bells stood waiting at the door. Garabato had already seated himself on the box with his bundle of *muletas* and swords. Three bull-fighters were inside with their capes over their knees, dressed in gayly colored clothes embroidered with as great profusion as the master's, but in silver.

Pressed onward by the popular ovation, and having to defend himself with his elbows from greedy hands, Gallardo reached the carriage-step.

"Good-afternoon, gentlemen," he said shortly to the men of his *cuadrilla*.

He seated himself at the back so that all could see him, and smiled with responsive nods to the shouts of some ragged women and to the short applause begun by some newsboys.

The carriage started with all the impetus of the spirited mules, filling the street with gay ringing. The mob parted to give passage but many rushed at the carriage as though they would fall under its wheels. Hats and canes were waved; an explosion of enthusiasm burst from the crowd, one of those contagions that agitate and madden the masses at certain times — making every one shout without knowing why.

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

“Hurrah for the brave! *Viva España!*”

Gallardo, ever pale and smiling, saluted, repeating “many thanks,” moved by the contagion of popular enthusiasm and proud of his standing which united his name to that of his native land.

A troop of dishevelled youngsters ran after the coach at full speed, as though convinced that, at the end of the mad race, something extraordinary surely awaited them.

For at least an hour Alcalá Street had been like a river of carriages that flowed toward the outskirts of the city between two banks of close-packed foot passengers. All kinds of vehicles, ancient and modern, figured in this tumultuous and noisy emigration, from the ancient diligence, brought to light like an anachronism, to the automobile. Crowded tramways passed with groups of people overflowing on their steps. Omnibuses carried people to the corner of Seville Street, while the conductor shouted “To the plaza! To the plaza!” Tasselled mules with jingling bells trotted ahead of open carriages in which rode women in white *mantillas* with bright flowers in their hair; every instant exclamations of alarm were heard at the escape, by apelike agility, of some boy beneath the wheels of a carriage as he crossed by leaps from one sidewalk to the other defying the current of vehicles. Automobile horns tooted; coachmen yelled; newsboys shouted the page with the picture and history of the bulls that were to be fought, or the likeness and biography of the famous *matadores*, and from time to time an explosion of curiosity swelled the deafening roar of the crowd.

Among the dark steeds of the mounted police rode gayly dressed *caballeros* with their legs rigidly encased

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

in yellow leggings, wearing gilded jackets and beaver hats with heavy tassels in lieu of a cockade, mounted on thin and miserable hacks. They were the *picadores*. Aft on the crupper, behind the high Moorish saddle, rode an impish figure dressed in red, the *mono sabio*, or servant who had brought the troop of horses to their hostelry.

The *cuadrillas* passed in open coaches, and the embroidery of the bull-fighters, reflecting the afternoon light, seemed to dazzle the crowd and excite its enthusiasm. "That is Fuentes!" "That is Bomba!" And the people, pleased with the identification, followed the retreating carriages with greedy stare as if something startling were going to happen and they feared to be too late.

From the top of the hill on Alcalá Street the broad straight road shone white in the sun, with its rows of trees turning green at the breath of spring, the balconies black with people, and the highway only visible at intervals beneath the ant-like movement of the crowd and the rolling of the coaches descending to the Fountain of Cibeles. Here the hill rose again amid groves and tall buildings and the Puerta de Alcalá closed the perspective like a triumphal arch, rearing its perforated white mass against the blue space in which flecks of clouds floated like solitary swans.

Gallardo rode in silence, responding to the multitude with a fixed smile. Since his greeting to the *banderilleros* he had not spoken a word. They were also silent and pale with anxiety over the unknown. Being all bull-fighters together, they put aside as useless the gallantries necessary before the public.

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

A mysterious influence seemed to tell the crowd of the passing of the last *cuadrilla* that wound its way to the plaza. The vagabonds that ran behind the coach shouting after Gallardo had been outstripped and the group scattered among the carriages, but in spite of this the people turned their heads as if they divined the proximity of the celebrated bull-fighter behind them and they stopped, lining up against the edge of the sidewalk to see him better.

The women in the coaches in advance turned their heads, attracted by the jingling bells of the trotting mules. An indescribable roar rose from certain groups that barred the passage along the sidewalks. There were enthusiastic exclamations. Some waved their hats; others lifted canes and swung them in salutation.

Gallardo responded to all with grinning smile but in his preoccupation he seemed to take small account of these greetings. At his side rode Nacional, his confidential servant, a *banderillero*, older than himself by ten years, a rugged, strong man with brows grown together and a grave visage. He was famous among the men of the profession for his good nature, his manliness, and his political enthusiasms.

"Juan—don't complain of Madri'," said Nacional; "thou art made with the public."

But Gallardo, as if he did not hear him and as if he wished to get away from the thoughts that occupied him, answered:

"I feel it in my heart that something's going to happen this afternoon."

When they arrived at Cibeles the coach stopped. A great funeral was coming along the Prado from the Cas-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

tellana, cutting through the avalanche of carriages from Alcalá Street.

Gallardo turned paler, contemplating with angry eyes the passing of the cross and the defile of the priests who broke into a grave chant as they gazed, some with aversion, others with envy, at that God-forgotten multitude running after amusement.

Gallardo made haste to take off his cap, in which he was imitated by all his *banderilleros* except Nacional.

"But damn it!" yelled Gallardo, "uncover, *condenao!*"

He looked furious, as though he would strike him, convinced by some confused intuition that this rebellion would cause the most terrible misfortune to befall him.

"Well, I take it off," said Nacional with the ill grace of a thwarted child, as he saw the cross pass on, "I take it off, but it is to the dead."

They were detained some time to let the long *cortège* pass.

"Bad sign!" muttered Gallardo in a voice trembling with anger. "Whoever would have thought of bringing a funeral along the road to the plaza? Damn it! I say something's going to happen to-day!"

Nacional smiled, shrugging his shoulders.

"Superstitions and fanaticisms! Neither God nor Nature bothers over these things."

These words, which irritated Gallardo still more, caused the grave preoccupation of the other bull-fighters to vanish, and they began to joke about their companion as they did on all occasions when he dragged in his favorite expression of "God or Nature."

When the road was clear the carriage began to move at the full speed of the mules, crowding along with the

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

other vehicles that flowed to the plaza. Arrived there it turned to the left toward the gate of the stables that led to the enclosures and stalls, obliged to move now at slower pace among the dense crowd. Another ovation to Gallardo when he descended from the coach followed by his *banderilleros*; blows and pushes to keep his dress from unclean contact; smiles of greeting; concealment of the right hand which all wished to press.

“Make way, gentlemen! many thanks!”

The large enclosure between the body of the plaza and the walls of the outbuildings was full of the curious who wished to see the bull-fighters at close range before taking their seats. Above the heads of the crowd emerged the *picadores* and guards on horseback in their seventeenth century dress. At one side of the enclosure rose one-story brick buildings with vines over the doors and pots of flowers in the windows, a small community of offices, shops, stables, and houses in which lived the stable boys, the carpenters, and other employees of the bull-ring.

The *matador* pressed forward laboriously among the assemblage. His name passed from mouth to mouth with exclamations of enthusiasm.

“Gallardo! Here is Gallardo! Hurrah! *Viva España!*”

And he, wholly preoccupied by the adoration of the public, advanced swaggering, serene as a god, happy and satisfied, as if he were assisting at a feast in his honor.

Suddenly two arms encircled his neck, and a strong stench of wine assailed his nostrils.

“You smasher of women’s hearts! You glorious one! Hurrah for Gallardo!”

It was a man of decent appearance; he rested his head

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

on the swordsman's shoulder and thus remained as though falling asleep in spite of his enthusiasm. Gallardo's pushing, and the pulling of his friends, freed the bull-fighter from this interminable embrace. The drunken man, finding himself separated from his idol, broke out in shouts of enthusiasm. "Hurrah! Let all the nations of the world come to admire bull-fighters like this one and die of envy! They may have ships, they may have money, but that's trivial! They have neither bulls nor youths like this — no one to outstrip him in bravery. Hurrah, my boy! *Viva mi tierra!*"

Gallardo crossed a great white washed hall bare of furniture where his professional companions stood surrounded by enthusiastic groups. Way was immediately made among the crowd which obstructed a door, and he passed through it into a narrow, dark room, at the end of which shone the lights of the chapel. An ancient painting representing the Virgin of the Dove hung over the back of the altar. Four candles were burning before it and branches of moth-eaten cloth flowers in vases of common earthenware were falling to dust.

The chapel was full of people. The devotees of the humbler classes crowded in to see the great men close by. They remained in the dimness with uncovered head; some crowded into the foremost ranks, others stood on chairs and benches, the majority of them with their backs to the Virgin and looking greedily toward the door, ready to shout a name the instant they discerned the glitter of a spangled costume.

The *banderilleros* and *picadores*, poor devils who were going to expose their lives as much as were the *maestros*, scarcely raised the slightest murmur by their presence.

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

Only the most fervent enthusiasts recognized their nicknames.

Suddenly a prolonged buzzing, a name repeated from mouth to mouth:

“Fuentes! — That is Fuentes!”

And this elegant bull-fighter with his air of gentility and his cape over his shoulder advanced to the altar and bent one knee with theatrical arrogance, his gypsy-like eyes reflecting the lights and his graceful and agile body thrown back as he looked upward. As soon as his prayer was said and he had made the sign of the cross he rose, walking backwards toward the door without losing sight of the image, like a singer who retires bowing to the audience.

Gallardo was more simple in his devotions. He entered swaggering with no less arrogance, cap in hand and his cape folded, but on finding himself in the presence of the image he fell on both knees and gave himself up to prayer, unconscious of the hundreds of eyes fixed on him. His simple Christian soul trembled with fear and remorse. He asked protection with the fervor of ingenuous men who live in continual danger and believe in all kinds of adverse influences and in supernatural protection.

For the first time during the whole exciting day he thought of his wife and mother. Poor Carmen, there in Seville awaiting the telegram! Señora Angustias, happy with her chickens at the farm of La Rinconada, without knowing for a certainty in what place her son fought the bulls to-day! And he with the terrible presentiment that this afternoon something was going to happen! Virgin of the Dove! Some little protection! He would

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

be good, he would forget the *other one*, he would live as God commands.

And with his superstitious spirit strengthened with this vain repentance, he left the chapel with troubled eyes, still deeply stirred and heedless of the people who obstructed the way.

Outside in the room where the bull-fighters were waiting, a shaven-faced man, dressed in a black habit which he seemed to wear with a certain slovenliness, greeted him.

"Bad sign!" murmured the bull-fighter, continuing on his way. "When I say that something is going to happen to-day —"

The black-robed man was the chaplain of the plaza, an enthusiast in the art of bull-fighting, who had come with the Holy Oils beneath his habit. He was accompanied by a neighbor who served him as sacristan in exchange for a seat to see the bull-fight. On bull-fight days he hired a carriage, which the management paid for, and he chose by turns among his friends and *protégés* one on whom to confer the favor of the seat destined for the sacristan, beside his own in the front row near the doors of the bull-pen.

The priest entered the chapel with a proprietary air, scandalized at the behavior of the congregation; all had their hats off, but were talking in a loud voice and some were even smoking.

"Gentlemen, this is not a *café*. Be so kind as to go out. The bull-fight is going to begin."

This news caused a dispersion, while the priest took out the hidden Holy Oils and placed them in a box of painted wood. Then he too, as soon as he had secreted

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

the sacred articles, ran out to take his place in the plaza before the appearance of the *cuadrilla*.

The crowd had disappeared. No one was to be seen in the enclosure but men dressed in silk and embroidery, yellow horsemen with great beaver hats, guards on horseback, and the assistants in their suits of gold and blue.

The bull-fighters formed with customary promptness before the horses' gate beneath an arch that gave exit to the plaza, the *maestros* at the front, then the *banderilleros* keeping far apart, and behind them, in the enclosure itself, stamped the sturdy rough squadron of the *picadores*, smelling of burnt hide and dung, mounted on skeleton-like horses with one eye bandaged. As rearguard of this army the teams of mules intended for dragging out the slaughtered bulls fretted behind them; they were restless, vigorous animals with shining coats, covered with trappings of tassels and bells, and wore on their collars the waving national flag.

Beyond the arch, above the wooden gates which half obstructed it, opened a narrow space, leaving visible a portion of the sky, the tiled roof of the plaza, and a section of seats with the compact multitude swarming like ants, amid which fans and papers seemed to flutter like gayly colored mosquitoes. Through this gallery entered a strong breeze — the respiration of an immense lung. An harmonious humming was borne on the undulations of the air, making certain distant music felt, rather divined than heard.

About the archway peeped heads, many heads; those of the spectators on the nearby benches were thrust forward, curious to see the heroes without delay.

Gallardo arranged himself in line with the other bull-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

fighters, who exchanged among themselves grave inclinations of the head. They did not speak; they did not smile. Each one thought of himself, letting his imagination fly far away; or he thought of nothing, lost in that intellectual void produced by emotion. They occupied themselves with a ceaseless arranging of the cape, throwing it loosely over the shoulder, rolling its ends about the waist, and trying to make their legs, encased in silk and gold, show agile and brave under this gorgeous funnel. Every face was pale, not with a deathly pallor, but brilliant and livid, with the sweaty gloss of emotion. They thought of the arena, still unseen, experiencing that irresistible terror of events that take place on the other side of a wall, that fear of the hidden, the unknown danger that makes itself felt though invisible. How would the afternoon end?

Behind the *cuadrillas* sounded the trotting of the horses that entered through the outer arcades of the plaza. They bore the constables with their long black cloaks and bell-shaped hats decorated with red and yellow feathers. They had just cleared the ring, emptying it of the curious, and they came to put themselves at the head of the *cuadrillas*, serving them as advance guards.

The doors of the archway and those of the barrier wall opposite opened wide. The great ring appeared, the real plaza, the circular space of sand where the tragedy of the afternoon was to be enacted for the excitement and entertainment of fourteen thousand souls. The harmonious and confused buzzing increased, developing into gay and bizarre music, a triumphal march of sounding brass that caused arms to swing martially and hips to swagger. Forward, ye brave!

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

And the bull-fighters, winking at the violent transition, passed from the shadow to the light, from the silence of the quiet gallery to the roar of the ring on whose surrounding seats surged the crowd in waves of curiosity, rising to their feet to see to better advantage.

The *toreros* advanced, seeming suddenly to diminish in size in comparison to the length of the perspective as they trod the arena. They resembled brilliant little puppets, whose embroideries caught rainbow reflections from the sun. Their graceful movements fired the people with an enthusiasm like to that of the child in the presence of a wonderful toy. The mad gust that stirred the crowds, causing their nerves to tingle and their flesh to creep, they knew not why, moved the whole plaza.

The people applauded, the more enthusiastic and nervous yelled, the music rumbled and, in the midst of this outburst which spread in every direction, from the door of the exit to the president's box, the *cuadrillas* advanced with solemn pace, the graceful movements of arms and bodies compensating for the shortness of step. In the ring of blue ether overhanging above the plaza white doves were winging as if frightened by the roar that escaped from this crater of brick.

The athletes felt themselves different men as they advanced across the arena. They exposed their lives for something more than money. Their uncertainty and terror in the presence of the unknown were left behind those barriers; now they were before the public; they faced reality. And the thirst for glory in their barbarous and simple souls, the desire to outstrip their comrades, their pride of strength and skill, blinded them, made them forget fear and filled them with a brutal courage.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Gallardo had become transfigured. He walked erect, aspiring to be taller; he moved with the arrogance of a conqueror. He gazed in all directions with a triumphant air, as though his two companions did not exist. Everything was his; the plaza and the public. He felt himself capable of killing every bull that roamed the pastures of Andalusia and Castile. All the applause was for him, he was sure of it. The thousands of feminine eyes shaded by white *mantillas* in boxes and benches, dwelt only on his person. He had no doubt of it. The public adored him and, as he advanced, smiling flippantly, as though the entire ovation were directed to his person, he looked along the rows of seats on the rising tiers knowing where the greater number of his partisans were grouped and seeming to ignore those sections where his rivals' friends were assembled.

They saluted the president, cap in hand, and the brilliant defile broke up, lackeys and horsemen scattering about the arena. Then, while a guard caught in his hat the key thrown by the president, Gallardo turned toward the rows of seats where sat his greatest admirers and handed them his glittering cape to keep for him. The handsome garment, grasped by many hands, was spread over the wall as though it were a banner, a sacred symbol of loyalty.

The most enthusiastic partisans stood waving hands and canes, greeting the *matador* with shouts manifesting their expectations. "Let the boy from Seville show what he can do!"

And he, leaning against the barrier, smiling, sure of his strength, answered, "Many thanks. What can be done will be done."

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

Not only were his admirers hopeful of him, but all the people fixed their attention upon him in a state of great excitement. He was a bull-fighter who seemed likely to meet with a catastrophe some day, and the sort of catastrophe which called for a bed in the hospital.

Every one believed he was destined to die in the plaza as the result of a horn-stab, and this very belief caused them to applaud him with homicidal enthusiasm, with barbaric interest like that of the misanthrope who follows an animal tamer from place to place, expecting every moment to see him devoured by his wild beasts.

Gallardo laughed at the old professors of tauromachy who consider a mishap impossible as long as the bull-fighter sticks to the rules of the art. Rules! He knew them not and did not trouble himself to learn them. Valor and audacity were all that were necessary to win. And, almost blindly, without other guide than his temerity, or other support than that of his physical faculties, he had risen rapidly, astonishing the public into paroxysms, stupefying it with wonder by his mad daring.

He had not climbed up, step by step, as had other *matadores*, serving long years first as *peón* and *banderillero* at the side of the *maestros*. He had never known fear of a bull's horns. "Hunger stabs worse." He had risen suddenly and the public had seen him begin as *espada*, achieving immense popularity in a few years.

They admired him for the reason that they held his misfortune a certainty. He fired the public with devilish enthusiasm for the blind way in which he defied Death. They gave him the same attention and care that they would give a criminal preparing for eternity. This bull-fighter was not one of those who held power in reserve;

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

he gave everything, his life included. It was worth the money it cost. And the multitude, with the bestiality of those who witness danger from a point of safety, admired and urged the hero on. The prudent made wry faces at his deeds; they thought him a predestined suicide, shielded by luck, and murmured, "While he lasts!"

Drums and trumpets sounded and the first bull entered. Gallardo, with his plain working-cape over one arm, remained near the barrier close to the ranks of his partisans, in disdainful immobility, believing that the whole plaza had their eyes glued on him. That bull was for some one else. He would show signs of existence when his arrived. But the applause for the skilful cape-work of his companions brought him out of his quiet, and in spite of his intention he went at the bull, achieving several feats due more to audacity than to skill. The whole plaza applauded him, moved by predisposition in his favor because of his daring.

When Fuentes killed the first bull and walked toward the president's box, bowing to the multitude, Gallardo turned paler, as though all show of favor that was not for him was equivalent to ignominious oblivion. Now his turn was coming; great things were going to be seen. He did not know for a certainty what they might be but he was going to astound the public.

Scarcely had the second bull appeared when Gallardo, by his activity and his desire to shine, seemed to fill the whole plaza. His cape was ever near the bull's nose. A *picador* of his *cuadrilla*, the one called Potaje, was thrown from his horse and lay unprotected near the horns, but the *maestro*, grabbing the beast's tail, pulled with herculean strength and made him turn till the horseman was safe. The public applauded, wild with enthusiasm.

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

When the time for placing the *banderillas* arrived, Gallardo stood between the inner and outer barrier awaiting the bugle signal to kill. Nacional, with the *banderilla* in his hand, attracted the bull to the centre of the plaza. No grace nor audacity was in his bearing; it was merely a question of earning bread. Away in Seville were four small children who, if he were to die, would not find another father. To fulfil his duty and nothing more; only to throw his *banderillas* like a journeyman of tauro-machy, without desire for ovations and merely well enough to avoid being hissed!

When he had placed the first pair, some of the spectators in the vast circle applauded, and others bantered the *banderillero* in a waggish tone, alluding to his hobbies.

“Less politics, and get closer!”

And Nacional, deceived by the distance, on hearing these shouts answered smiling, like his master:

“Many thanks; many thanks.”

When Gallardo leaped anew into the arena at the sound of the trumpets and drums which announced the last play, the multitude stirred with a buzzing of emotion. This *matador* was its own. Now they were going to see something great.

He took the *muleta* from the hands of Garabato, who offered it folded as he came inside the walls; he grasped the sword which his servant also presented to him, and with short steps walked over and stood in front of the president's box carrying his cap in his hand. All craned their necks, devouring the idol with their eyes, but no one heard his speech. The arrogant, slender figure, the body thrown back to give greater force to his words, produced on the multitude the same effect as the most elo-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

quent address. As he ended his peroration with a half turn, throwing his cap on the ground, enthusiasm broke out long and loud. Hurrah for the boy from Seville! Now they were to see the real thing! And the spectators looked at each other mutely, anticipating stupendous events. A tremor ran along the rows of seats as though they were in the presence of something sublime.

The profound silence produced by great emotions fell suddenly upon the multitude as though the plaza had been emptied. The life of so many thousands of persons was condensed into their eyes. No one seemed to breathe.

Gallardo advanced slowly toward the bull holding the *muleta* across his body like a banner, and waving his sword in his other hand with a pendulum-like movement that kept time with his step.

Turning his head an instant he saw that Nacional with another member of his *cuadrilla* was following to assist him, his cape over his arm.

“Stand aside, everybody!”

A voice rang out in the silence of the plaza making itself heard even to the farthest seats, and a burst of admiration answered it. “Stand aside, everybody!” He had said, “Stand aside, everybody!” What a man!

He walked up to the beast absolutely alone, and instantly silence fell again. He calmly readjusted the red flag on the stick, extended it, and advanced thus a few steps until he almost touched the nose of the bull, which stood stupefied and terrified by the audacity of the man.

The public dared not speak nor even breathe but admiration shone in their eyes. What a youth! He walked in between the very horns! He stamped the ground im-

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

patiently with one foot, inciting the beast to attack, and that enormous mass of flesh, defended by sharp horns fell bellowing upon him. The *muleta* passed over his horns, which grazed the tassels and fringes of the dress of the bull-fighter standing firm in his place, with no other movement than a backward bending of his body. A shout from the crowd answered this whirl of the *muleta*. Hurrah!

The infuriated beast returned; he re-attacked the man with the "rag," who repeated the pass, with the same roar from the public. The bull, made more and more furious by the deception, attacked the athlete who continued whirling the red flag within a short distance, fired by the proximity of danger and the wondering exclamations of the crowd that seemed to intoxicate him.

Gallardo felt the animal snort upon him; the moist vapor from its muzzle wet his right hand and his face. Grown familiar by contact he looked upon the brute as a good friend who was going to let himself be killed to contribute to his glory.

The bull stood motionless for some seconds as if tired of this play, gazing with hazy eyes at the man and at the red scarf, suspecting in his obscure mind the existence of a trick which with attack after attack was drawing him toward death.

Gallardo felt the presentiment of his happiest successes. Now! He rolled the flag with a circular movement of his left hand around the staff and he raised his right hand to the height of his eyes, standing with the sword pointing towards the neck of the beast.

The crowd was stirred by a movement of protest and horror.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

"Don't strike yet," shouted thousands of voices.
"No, no!"

It was too soon. The bull was not in good position; he would make a lunge and catch him. But Gallardo moved regardless of all rules of the art. What did either rules or life matter to that desperate man?

Suddenly he threw himself forward with his sword held before him, at the same time that the wild beast fell upon him. It was a brutal, savage encounter. For an instant man and beast formed a single mass and thus moved together several paces, no one knowing which was the conqueror, the man with an arm and part of his body lying between the two horns, or the beast lowering his head and trying to seize with his defences the puppet of gold and colors which seemed to be slipping away from him.

At last the group parted, the *muleta* lay on the ground like a rag, and the bull-fighter, his hands free, went staggering back from the impulse of the shock until he recovered his equilibrium a few steps away. His clothing was in disorder; his cravat floated outside his vest, gored and torn by one of the horns.

The bull raced on impelled by the momentum of his start. Above his broad neck the red hilt of the sword embedded to the cross scarcely protruded. Suddenly the animal paused, shuddering with a painful movement of obeisance, doubled his fore legs, inclined his head till his bellowing muzzle touched the sand, and finished by lying down with shudders of agony.

It seemed as if the very building would fall, as if the bricks dashed against one another, as if the multitude was about to fly panic-stricken, by the way it rose to

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

its feet, pale, tremulous, gesticulating and throwing its arms. Dead! What a stroke! Every one had believed for a second that the *matador* was caught on the horns. All had felt sure they would see him fall upon the sand stained with blood and, as they beheld him standing up still giddy from the shock but smiling, surprise and amazement augmented the enthusiasm.

“How fierce!” they shouted from the tiers of seats, not finding a more fitting word to express their astonishment — “How rash!”

Hats flew into the arena and a deafening roar of applause, like a shower of hail, ran from row to row of seats as the *matador* advanced around the ring until he stood in front of the president’s box.

The ovation burst out clamorously when Gallardo, extending his arms, saluted the president. All shouted, demanding for the swordsman the honors due to mastery. They must give him the ear. Never was this distinction so merited; few sword-thrusts like that had ever been seen; and the enthusiasm increased when a *mozo* of the plaza handed him a dark triangle, hairy and blood-stained — the point of one of the beast’s ears.

The third bull was now in the ring, but the ovation to Gallardo continued as though the public had not yet recovered from its amazement; as though all that might occur during the rest of the bull-fight would be tame in comparison.

The other bull-fighters, pale with professional envy, strove valiantly to attract the attention of the public. Applause was given, but it was weak and faint after the former ovations. The public was exhausted by the delirium of its enthusiasm and heeded absent-mindedly

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

the events that took place in the ring. Fiery discussions broke out and ran from tier to tier. The adherents of other bull-fighters, serene and unmoved by the transports that had overcome the people, took advantage of the spontaneous movement, to turn the discussion upon Gallardo. Very valiant, very daring, a suicide, they said, but that was not art. And the vehement adherents of the idol, proud of his audacity and carried away by their own feelings, became indignant like the believer who sees the miracles of his favorite saint held in doubt.

The attention of the public was diverted by incidents that disturbed the people on some of the tiers of seats. Suddenly those in one section moved; the spectators rose to their feet, turning their backs to the ring; arms and canes whirled above their heads. The rest of the crowd ceased looking at the arena, directing their attention to the seat of trouble and to the large numbers, painted on the inner wall, that marked the different sections of the amphitheatre.

"Fight in the third!" they yelled joyfully. "Now there's a row in the fifth!"

Following the contagious impulse of the crowd, all became excited and rose to their feet to see over their neighbors' heads but were unable to distinguish anything except the slow ascent of the police who, opening a passage from step to step, reached the group where the dispute had begun.

"Sit down!" exclaimed the more prudent, deprived of their view of the ring where the bull-fighters continued the game.

Little by little the waves of the multitude calmed, the

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

rows of heads assumed their former regularity on the circular lines of the benches, and the bull-fight went on. But the nerves of the audience were shaken and their state of mind manifested itself in unjust animosity toward certain fighters or by profound silence.

The public, exhausted by the recent intense emotion, found all the events tame. They sought to allay their *ennui* by eating and drinking. The venders in the plaza went about between *barreras*, throwing with marvellous skill the articles bought. Oranges flew like red balls to the highest row, going from the hand of the seller to those of the buyer in a straight line, as if pulled by a thread. Bottles of carbonated drinks were uncorked. The liquid gold of Andalusian wines shone in little glasses.

A movement of curiosity circulated along the benches. Fuentes was about to fix the *banderillas* in his bull and every one expected some extraordinary show of skill and grace. He advanced alone to the centre of the plaza with the *banderillas* in one hand, serene, tranquil, walking slowly, as though he were to begin a game. The bull followed his movements with curious eyes, amazed to see the man alone before him after the former hurly-burly of fluttering and extended capes, of cruel barbs thrust into his neck, of horses that came and stood within reach of his horns, as if offering themselves to his attack.

The man hypnotized the beast. He drew near until he could touch his poll with the point of the *banderillas*, then he ran slowly away, with short steps, the bull after him, as though persuaded into obedience and drawn against his will to the extreme opposite side of the plaza. The animal seemed to be mastered by the bull-fighter;

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

he obeyed him in all his movements until the man, calling the game ended, extended his arms with a *banderilla* in each hand, raised his small, slender body upon his toes, advanced toward the bull with majestic ease, and thrust the gayly colored darts into its neck.

Three times he performed the same feat, applauded by the public. Those who considered themselves connoisseurs retaliated now for the explosion of enthusiasm provoked by Gallardo. This was a bull-fighter! This was pure art.

Gallardo, standing near the barrier, wiped the sweat off his face with a towel which Garabato handed him. Then he turned his back on the ring to avoid seeing the prowess of his companion. Outside of the plaza he esteemed his rivals with that feeling of fraternity established by danger; but as soon as they stepped into the arena all were enemies and their triumphs pained him as if they were offences. Now the enthusiasm of the public seemed to him a robbery that diminished his own great triumph.

When the fifth bull came out, it was for him, and he sprang into the arena anxious to again startle the public by his daring.

When a *picador* fell he threw his cape and enticed the bull to the other side of the ring, confusing him with a series of movements until the beast became stupefied and stood motionless. Then Gallardo touched his nose with one foot, and took his cap and put it between the horns. Again, he took advantage of the animal's stupefaction and thrust his body forward as an audacious challenge, and knelt at a short distance, all but lying down under the brute's nose.

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

The old *aficionados* protested loudly. Monkey-shines! Clown-tricks, that would not have been tolerated in olden days! But they had to subside, wearied by the tumult of the public.

When the signal for the *banderillas* was given the people were thrown into suspense by seeing that Gallardo took the darts from Nacional and walked towards the beast with them. There was an exclamation of protest. *He to throw the banderillas!* All knew his inexperience in that direction. This ought to be left to those who had risen in their career step by step, for those who had been *banderilleros* many years at the side of their *maestros* before becoming bull-fighters; and Gallardo had begun at the top, killing bulls ever since he stepped into the plaza.

“No! No!” clamored the multitude.

Doctor Ruiz shouted and gesticulated from the *contrabarrera*.

“Leave off that, boy! Thou knowest but the great act — to kill!”

But Gallardo scorned the public and was deaf to its protests when he felt the impulse of audacity. Amidst the outcries he went directly towards the bull, which never moved and, *zas!* he stuck in the *banderillas*. The pair lodged out of place, and only skin deep, and one of the sticks fell at the beast’s movement of surprise. But this mattered not. With that lenity the multitude ever feels for its idols, excusing and justifying their defects, the entire public commended this piece of daring by smiling. He, growing more rash, took other *banderillas* and lodged them, heedless of the protests of the people who feared for his life. Then he repeated the act a third

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

time, each time doing it crudely but with such fearlessness that what in another would have provoked hisses was received with great explosions of admiration. What a man! How luck aided this daring youth!

The bull stood with only four of the *banderillas* in his neck, and those so lightly embedded that he did not seem to feel them.

"He is perfectly sound," yelled the devotees on the rows of seats, alluding to the bull, while Gallardo, grasping sword and *muleta*, marched up to him, with his cap on, arrogant and calm, trusting in his lucky star.

"Aside, all!" he shouted again.

Divining that some one was near him giving no heed to his orders he turned his head. Fuentes was a few steps away. He had followed him, his cape over his arm, feigning inattention but ready to come to his aid as though he felt a premonition of an accident.

"Leave me alone, Antonio," said Gallardo, with an expression that was at once angry and respectful, as though he were talking to an elder brother, at which Fuentes shrugged his shoulders as if he thus threw off all responsibility, and turned his back and walked away slowly, but feeling certain of being needed at any moment.

Gallardo waved his flag in the beast's very face and the latter attacked. "A pass! Hurrah!" the enthusiasts roared. But the animal suddenly returned, falling upon the *matador* again and giving him such a violent blow with his head that the *muleta* was knocked from his hands. Finding himself unarmed and hard-pressed he had to make for the *barrera*, but at the same instant Fuentes' cape distracted the animal. Gallardo, who di-

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

vined during his flight the beast's sudden halt, did not jump over the *barrera*; he sat on the vaulting wall an instant, contemplating his enemy a few paces away. The rout ended in applause for this show of serenity.

Gallardo recovered the *muleta* and sword, carefully arranged the red flag, and again stood in front of the beast's head, less calmly, but dominated instead by a murderous fury, by a desire to kill instantly the animal that had made him run in sight of thousands of admirers.

He had scarcely made a pass with the flag when he thought the decisive moment had arrived and he squared himself, the *muleta* held low, the hilt of the sword raised close to his eyes.

The public protested again, fearing for his life.

"He'll throw thee! No! *Aaay!*"

It was an exclamation of horror that moved the whole plaza; a spasm that caused the multitude to rise to its feet with eyes staring while the women covered their faces or grasped the nearest arm in terror.

At the bull-fighter's thrust the sword struck bone, and, delayed in the movement of stepping aside on account of this difficulty, Gallardo had been caught by one of the horns and now hung upon it by the middle of his body. The brave youth, so strong and wiry, found himself tossed about on the end of the horn like a miserable manikin until the powerful beast, with a shake of his head, flung him some yards away, where he fell heavily on the sand with arms and legs extended, like a frog dressed in silk and gold.

"He is killed! A horn-stab in the belly!" They shouted from the rows of seats.

But Gallardo got up amidst the capes and the men who

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

rushed to cover and save him. He smiled; he tested his body; then he raised his shoulders to indicate to the public that it was nothing. A jar—no more, and the belt torn to shreds. The horn had only penetrated the wrapping of strong silk.

Again he grasped the instruments of death, but now nobody would remain seated, divining that the encounter would be short and terrible. Gallardo marched towards the beast with a blind impulse determined to kill or die immediately, without delay or precaution. The bull or he! He saw red, as if blood had been injected into his eyes. He heard, as something distant that came from another world, the outcry of the multitude counselling calmness.

He made only two passes, aided by a cape that he held at his side, then suddenly, with the swiftness of a dream, like a spring that is loosed from its fastening, he threw himself upon the bull, giving him a stab that his admirers said was swift as a lightning stroke. He thrust his arm so far over that on escaping from between the horns he received a blow from one of them which sent him staggering away; but he kept on his feet, and the beast, after a mad run, fell at the extreme opposite side of the plaza and lay with his legs bent under him and the top of his head touching the sand until the *puntillero* came to finish him. The public seemed to go mad with enthusiasm. A glorious bull-fight! It was surfeited with excitement. That fellow Gallardo did not rob one of his money; he responded with excess to the price of entrance. The devotees would have material to talk about for three days at their meetings at the *café*. How brave! how fierce! And the most enthusiastic, with

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

warlike fervor, looked in every direction as if searching for enemies.

"The greatest *matador* in the world! And here am I to face whoever dare say to the contrary!"

The remainder of the bull-fight scarcely claimed attention. It all seemed tasteless and colorless after Gallardo's daring.

When the last bull fell upon the sand a surging crowd of boys, of popular devotees, of apprentices of the art of bull-fighting, invaded the ring. They surrounded Gallardo, following him on his way from the president's box to the door of exit. They crowded against him, all wishing to press his hand or touch his dress, and at last, the most vehement, paying no attention to the gesticulations of Nacional and the other *banderilleros*, caught the master by the legs and raised him to their shoulders, carrying him around the ring and through the galleries to the outer edge of the plaza.

Gallardo, taking off his cap, bowed to the groups that applauded his triumph. Wrapped in his glittering cape, he allowed himself to be carried like a divinity, motionless and erect above the current of Cordovan hats and Madrid caps, amidst acclamations of enthusiasm.

As he stepped into his carriage at the lower end of Alcalá Street, hailed by the crowd that had not seen the bull-fight, but which already knew of his triumphs, a smile of pride, of satisfaction in his own strength, illuminated his sweaty countenance over which the pallor of emotion still spread.

Nacional, anxious about the master's having been caught and about his violent fall, wished to know if he felt any pain, and if he should call Doctor Ruiz.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

"It's nothing; a petting, nothing more. No bull alive can kill me."

But as though in the midst of his pride arose the recollection of his past weaknesses, and as though he thought he saw in Nacional's eyes an ironic expression, he added:

"Those are things that affect me before going to the plaza; something like hysteria in women. But thou art right, Sebastián. How sayest thou? God or Nature, that's it; neither God nor Nature should meddle in affairs of bull-fighting. Every one gets through as he can, by his skill or by his courage, and recommendations from earth or from heaven are of no use to him. Thou hast talent, Sebastián; thou shouldst have studied for a career."

In the optimism of his joy he looked upon the *banderillero* as a sage, forgetting the jests with which he had always received the latter's topsy-turvy reasoning.

When he reached his lodging he found many admirers in the vestibule anxious to embrace him. They talked of his deeds with such hyperbole that they seemed altered, exaggerated, and transfigured by the comments made in the short distance from the plaza to the hotel.

Upstairs his room was full of friends, gentlemen who *thoued* him, and, imitating the rustic speech of the country people, shepherds and cattle-breeders, said to him, slapping his shoulders:

"Thou hast done very well; but really, very well!"

Gallardo freed himself from this enthusiastic reception and went out into the corridor with Garabato.

"Go and send a telegram home. Thou knowest what to say: '*As usual.*'"

THE MATADOR AND THE LADY

Garabato protested. He must help the *maestro* undress. The servants of the hotel would take charge of sending the despatch.

“No, I wish it to be thou. I will wait. Thou must send another telegram. Thou already knowest who to — to that lady; to Doña Sol. Also ‘*As usual.*’”

CHAPTER III

BORN FOR THE BULL-RING

WHEN Señora Angustias was bereft of her husband, Señor Juan Gallardo, the well known cobbler established in a *portal* in the ward of the Feria, she wept with the disconsolateness due the event, but at the same time, in the depths of her soul, she felt the satisfaction of one who rests after a long journey, freed from an overwhelming burden.

“Poor fellow, joy of my heart! May God keep him in His glory. So good! So industrious!”

During twenty years of life together, he had not caused her greater sorrows than those the rest of the women of the ward had to bear. Of the three *pesetas* he averaged as a result of his labor he handed over one to Señora Angustias for the support of the house and family, using the other two for personal entertainment and for keeping up appearances among his friends. He was obliged to respond to the attentions of his companions when they invited him to a convivial glass, and the famous Andalusian wine, since it is the glory of God, costs dear. Also it was inevitable that he should go to see the bulls, because a man who does not drink nor attend bull-fights — why is he in the world?

Señora Angustias with her two children, Encarnación and little Juan, had to sharpen her wits and develop numerous talents in order to keep the family together.

BORN FOR THE BULL-RING

She worked as a servant in the houses nearest her ward, sewed for the women of the neighborhood, sold clothing and trinkets for a certain brokeress, a friend of hers, and made cigarettes for the gentlemen, recalling her youthful aptitude when Señor Juan, an enthusiastic and favored lover, used to come and wait for her at the door of the Tobacco Factory.

Never could she complain of infidelity or ill-treatment on the part of her husband. On Saturdays when the cobbler used to come home drunk in the late hours of the night supported by his friends, joy and tenderness came with him. Señora Angustias had to drag him into the house, for he was determined to remain outside the door clapping his hands and intoning, with slobbery voice, tender love songs dedicated to his corpulent companion. And when the door was at last closed behind him, depriving the neighbors of a source of entertainment, Señor Juan, in a state of sentimental drunkenness, insisted on seeing the sleeping children; he kissed them, wetting their little faces with great tear-drops, and repeated his verses in honor of Señora Angustias (Hurrah! the greatest woman in the world!) till finally the good wife was compelled to cease frowning and to laugh while she undressed him and managed him as if he were a sick child.

This was his only vice. Poor fellow! There was not a sign of women or of gambling. His self-esteem which made him go well dressed while the family went in rags, and his unequal division of the products of his labor, were both compensated by generous incentives. Señora Angustias recollected with pride the great feast days when Juan had her put on her Manila shawl, her wed-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

ding *mantilla*, and, with the children walking in advance, he strode at her side with white Cordovan hat and silver handled cane, taking a walk along Delicias with the same air as any shopkeeper's family from Sierpes Street. On cheap bull-fight days he courted her pompously before going to the plaza, offering her glasses of wine at La Campana or at a *café* in the New Plaza. This happy time was now but a faint and pleasant memory in the recollection of the poor woman.

Señor Juan fell ill of phthisis and for two years the wife had to care for him, making still greater exertions in her industries to compensate for the lack of the *peseta* her husband used to turn over to her. At last he died in the hospital, resigned to his fate, convinced that existence was of no value without Andalusian wine and without bulls, and his last look of love and gratitude was for his wife, as if he would call out with his eyes: "Hurrah! the greatest woman in the world!"

When Señora Angustias was left alone her position did not change for the worse,—rather for the better. She enjoyed greater liberty in her movements, freed from the man who for the last two years had weighed more heavily upon her than the rest of the family. Being an energetic woman and of prompt decision, she immediately marked out a career for her children. Encarnación, who was now sixteen, went to the Tobacco Factory, where her mother was able to introduce her, thanks to her relations with certain friends of her youth who had become overseers. Juanillo, who as a lad had passed his days in the *portal* of the Feria watching his father work, should be a shoemaker, according to the will of Señora Angustias. She took him out of school, where he had

BORN FOR THE BULL-RING

learned to read but poorly, and at twelve he became an apprentice to one of the best shoemakers in Seville.

And now the martyrdom of the poor woman began.

Ah, that boy! Son of such honorable parents! Almost every day, instead of going to his master's shop he went to the slaughter-house with certain rascals who had their meeting place on a bench in the Alameda of Hercules and who delighted to flaunt a cape under the nose of young bullocks for the entertainment of herders and butchers, generally getting upset and trampled upon. Señora Angustias, who often toiled far into the night, needle in hand, so that the boy might go to the shop neat, with his clothing clean and mended, met him at the door when he came home with his pantaloons torn, his jacket dirty, and his face covered with lumps and scratches, afraid to enter yet without courage to flee owing to his hunger.

The welts made by his mother's blows and the marks of the broom-handle were added to the bruises of the treacherous bullocks, but the hero of the slaughter-house suffered them all, provided he did not lack his daily rations. "Beat me, but give me something to eat." And with his appetite awakened by violent exercise, he devoured the hard bread, the spoiled beans, the stale cod-fish, all the cheap food the diligent woman sought in the shops in the effort to maintain the family on her scanty earnings.

Toiling all day scrubbing floors, only now and then did she have an afternoon in which she could concern herself with her son's welfare and go to the cobbler's to learn of the progress of the apprentice. When she returned from the shoemaker's shop she was puffing and

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

blowing with anger and resolved upon terrible punishments to correct the vagabond.

Most of the time he failed to present himself at the shop at all. He spent the morning at the slaughter-house and in the afternoons he formed one of the group of vagabonds collected at the entrance of Sierpes Street, admiring at close range the bull-fighters out of work who gathered in Campana Street, dressed in new clothes, with resplendent hats but with no more than a *peseta* in their pockets, though each one was bragging of his exploits.

Little Juan contemplated them as if they were beings of marvellous superiority, envying their fine carriage and the boldness with which they flattered the women. The idea that each of these had at home a suit of silk embroidered with gold, and that with it on he strode before the multitude to the sound of music, produced a thrill of respect.

The son of Señora Angustias was known as the Little Cobbler among his ragged friends, and he showed satisfaction at having a nickname, as have nearly all the great men who appear in the ring. A foundation must be laid somewhere. He wore around his neck a red handkerchief which he had pilfered from his sister, and from beneath his cap his hair fell over his ears in thick locks which he carefully plastered down. He wore his plaited blouses of drill tucked into his trousers, which were ancient relics of his father's wardrobe made over by Señora Angustias; he insisted these must be high in the waist with the legs wide and the hips well tightened, and wept with humiliation when his mother would not yield to these exactions.

A cape! If only he might possess a fighting cape and

BORN FOR THE BULL-RING

not have to beg from other more fortunate boys the loan of the coveted "rag" for a few minutes! In a poor little room at home lay an old forgotten empty mattress case. Señora Angustias had sold the wool in days of stress. The Little Cobbler spent a morning locked in the room, taking advantage of the absence of his mother who was working as a servant in a priest's house.

With the ingenuity of a shipwrecked mariner on a desert isle who, thrown upon his own resources, must construct everything necessary to his existence, he cut a fighting cape from the damp and half-frayed cloth. Then he boiled in a pot a handful of red aniline bought at a druggist's, and dipped the ancient cotton in this dye. Little Juan admired his work — a cape of the most vivid scarlet that would arouse the greatest envy at the bull-baiting in the surrounding towns! Nothing remained but to dry it and he hung it in the sun beside the neighbor women's white clothes. The wind blew the dripping cloth about, bespattering the nearest pieces, until a chorus of curses and threats, clenched fists, and mouths that pronounced the ugliest of words against him and his mother, obliged the Little Cobbler to grasp his mantle of glory and take to his heels, his hands and face dyed red as though he had just committed a murder.

Señora Angustias, a strong, corpulent, be-whiskered woman who was not afraid of men, and inspired the respect of women for her energetic resolutions, was disheartened and weak in the presence of her son. What could she do? Her hands had pummelled every part of the boy's body; brooms were broken on him without beneficial results. That little imp had, according to her, the flesh of a dog. Accustomed outside of the house to the

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

tremendous butting of the steers, to the cruel trampling of the cows, to the clubs of herders and butchers who beat the band of vagabond bull-fighters without compassion, his mother's blows seemed to him a natural event, a continuation of his life outside prolonged inside the home, and he accepted them without the least intention of mending his ways, as a fee which he must pay in exchange for his sustenance, chewing the hard bread with hungry enjoyment, while the maternal maledictions and blows rained on his back.

Scarcely was his hunger appeased when he fled from the house, taking advantage of the freedom in which Señora Angustias left him when she absented herself on her round of duties.

In Campana Street, that venerable haunt of the bull-fighters where the gossip of the great doings of the profession circulated, he received information about his companions that gave him tremors of enthusiasm.

“Little Cobbler, a bull-fight to-morrow.”

The towns in the province celebrated the feasts of their patron saints with cape-teasing of bulls which had been rejected from the great plazas, and to these the young bull-fighters went in the hope of being able to say on their return that they had held the cape in the glorious plazas of Aznalcollar, Bollullos, or Mairena. They started on the journey at night with the cape over the shoulder if it were summer, or wrapped in it if winter, their stomachs empty, their heads full of visions of bulls and glory.

If the trip were of several days' journey they camped in the open, or they were admitted through charity to the hayloft of an inn. Alas for the grapes, melons, and

BORN FOR THE BULL-RING

figs they found by the way in those happy times! Their only fear was that another band, another *cuadrilla*, possessed of the same idea, would present itself in the *pueblo* and set up an opposition.

When they reached the end of their journey, with their eyebrows and mouths full of dust, tired and foot-sore from the march, they presented themselves to the *alcalde* and the boldest among them who performed the functions of director talked of the merits of his men. All considered themselves happy if the municipal generosity sheltered them in a stable of the hostelry and regaled them with a pot of stew in addition, which they would clean up instantly. In the village plaza enclosed by wagons and boards, they let loose aged bulls, regular forts of flesh covered with scabs and scars, with enormous saw-edged horns; cattle which had been fought many years in all the feasts of the province; venerable animals that "understood the game," such was their malice. Accustomed to one continual bull-fight they were in the secret of the tricks of the contest.

The youths of the *pueblo* pricked on the beasts from their place of safety and the people longed for an object of diversion greater than the bull—in the bull-fighters from Seville. These waved their capes, their legs trembling, their courage borne down by the weight of their stomachs. A tumble, and then great clamor from the public! When one in sudden terror took refuge behind the palisades, rural barbarity received him with insults, beating the hands clutching at the wood, pounding him on the legs to make him jump back into the ring. "Get back there, poltroon! Fraud, to turn your face from the bull."

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

At times one of the young swordsmen was borne out of the ring by four companions, pale as a sheet of white paper, his eyes glassy, his head fallen, his breast like a broken bellows. The veterinary came, quieting them all on seeing no blood. The boy was suffering from the shock of being thrown some yards and falling on the ground like a rag torn from a piece of clothing. Again it was the agony of having been stepped on by a beast of enormous weight. A bucket of water was thrown on his head and then, when he recovered his senses, they treated him to a long drink of brandy. A prince could not be better cared for!

To the ring again! And when the herder had no more bulls to let out and night was drawing near, two of the *cuadrilla* grasped the best cape belonging to the society and holding it by its edges went from one viewing stand to another soliciting a contribution. Copper coins fell upon the red cloth in proportion to the pleasure the strangers had given the country people; and, the bull-baiting ended, they started on their return to the city, knowing that they had exhausted their credit at the inn. Often they fought on the way over the distribution of the pieces of copper which they carried in a knotted handkerchief. Then the rest of the week, they recounted their deeds before the fascinated eyes of their companions who had not been members of the expedition.

Once Señora Angustias spent an entire week without hearing from her son. At last she heard vague rumors of his having been wounded in a bull-scrimmage in the town of Tocina. *Dios mío!* Where might that town be? How reach it? She gave up her son for dead, she wept for him, she longed to go; and then as she was getting

BORN FOR THE BULL-RING

ready to start on her journey, she saw little Juan coming home, pale, weak, but talking with manly joy of his accident.

It was nothing — a horn-stab in one thigh; a wound a fraction of an inch deep. And in the shamelessness of triumph he wanted to show it to the neighbors, affirming that a finger could be thrust into it without reaching its end. He was proud of the stench of iodoform that he shed as he walked, and he talked of the attention they had shown him in that town, which he considered the finest in Spain. The wealthiest citizens, one might say the aristocracy, interested themselves in his case, the *alcalde* had been to see him and later paid his way home. He still had three *duros* in his pocket, which he handed to his mother with the generosity of a great man. So much glory at fourteen! His satisfaction was yet greater when some genuine bull-fighters in Campana Street fixed their attention on the boy and asked him how his wound was getting along.

His companion in poverty was Chiripa, a boy of the same age, with a small body and malicious eyes, without father or mother, who had tramped about Seville ever since he had attained the use of his faculties. Chiripa was a master of the roving life and had travelled over the world. The two boys started on a journey empty of pocket, without other equipment than their capes, miserable cast-offs acquired for a few *reales* from a second-hand clothing store.

They clambered cautiously into trains and hid under seats. Often they were surprised by a trainman and, to the accompaniment of kicks and blows, were left by him on the platform of some solitary station while the

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

train vanished like a lost hope. They awaited the arrival of another, spending the night in the open, employing the cunning of primitive man to satisfy their necessities, crawling round about country houses to steal some solitary chicken, which, after wringing the fowl's neck, they would broil over a fire of dry wood and devour scorched and half raw, with the voracity of young savages.

Often when they slept in the open air near a station awaiting the passing of a train, a couple of guards would come up to them. On seeing the red bundles that served as pillows for these vagabonds, their suspicions were quieted. They gently removed the boys' caps, and on finding the hairy appendage they went away laughing without further investigation. These were not young thieves; they were apprentices who were going to the *capeas*. And in this tolerance there was a mixture of sympathy for the national sport and of respect for the obscure possibilities of the future. Who could tell if one of these ragged youths, despite his present appearance of poverty, might not in the future be a "star of the art," a great man who would kill bulls for the entertainment of kings, and live like a prince, and whose deeds and sayings would be exploited in the newspapers?

One afternoon, the Little Cobbler was left alone in a town of Extremadura. For the admiration of the rustic audience which applauded the famous bull-fighters "come purposely from Seville," the two boys threw *banderillas* at a fierce and ancient bull. Little Juan stuck his pair into the beast and was posing near a view-stand, proudly receiving the popular ovation of tremendous hand-clappings and proffers of cups of wine, when an exclamation

BORN FOR THE BULL-RING

of horror sobered him in his intoxication of glory. Chiripa was no longer on the ground of the plaza; only the *banderillas* rolling in the dust, one slipper and a cap were there. The bull was moving about as if irritated by some obstacle, carrying hooked on one of his horns a bundle of clothing resembling a puppet. With the violent tossing of his head the shapeless roll was loosened from the horn, ejecting a red stream, but before touching the ground it was caught by the opposite horn which in its turn tossed it about during what seemed an interminable time. At last, the sorry bulk fell to the dust and there it stayed, flabby and inert, like a punctured wine-skin expelling its contents.

The herder with his leaders took the bull into the corral, for no one else dared go near him, and poor Chiripa was carried upon a stretcher to a wretched little room in the town-house that served as a jail. His companion looked at him with a face as white as if made of plaster. Chiripa's eyes were glazed and his body was red with the blood which could not be stopped by the cloths wet with water and vinegar, which were applied in lieu of anything better.

"Adio', Little Cobbler!" he moaned. "Adio', Juanito!"

And he said no more. The companion of the dead youth, terrified, started on his return to Seville still seeing his glassy eyes, hearing his mournful good-bye. He was filled with fear. A gentle cow appearing in his path would have made him run. He thought of his mother and of the prudence of her counsel. Would it not be better to dedicate himself to shoemaking and live tranquilly? But these resolutions only lasted while he was

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

alone. When he reached Seville he felt the return of exhilaration. Friends rushed to him to hear about the death of poor Chiripa in every detail. Professional bull-fighters questioned him in Campana Street, remembering with pity the little vagabond with the pock-marked face who had often run errands for them. Juan, fired by such signs of consideration, gave rein to his powerful imagination, describing how he had thrown himself upon the bull when he had seen his poor companion hooked, how he had grabbed the beast by the tail and achieved even more wonderful feats, in spite of which the other boy had left this world.

The impulse of fear vanished. Bull-fighter — nothing but a bull-fighter! Since others were, why should he not be one? He recollected his mother's spoiled beans and hard bread; the deprivation each pair of new pantaloons had cost him; the hunger, that inseparable companion of many of his expeditions. Moreover he had a vehement desire for all the joys and displays of life; he gazed with envy at the coaches and the horses; he stood transfixed before the doors of the great houses through whose iron grilles he saw courtyards of Oriental sumptuousness and arcades of colored tiles, pavements with marble and chattering fountains casting a stream of pearls day and night into a basin surrounded by foliage. His fate was sealed. To kill bulls or die! To be rich, to have the newspapers talk of him, and to have the people bow to him, even though it were at the price of his life. He despised the lower grades of the art. He saw the *banderilleros* expose their lives equally with the swordsmen in exchange for thirty *duros* for each bull-fight; and, after a round of toil and horn-stabs, become old, with no other

BORN FOR THE BULL-RING

future than some wretched business bought with paltry savings, or else a position at the slaughter-house. Some died in the hospital; others begged alms from their youthful companions. He would have nothing to do with *banderilleros* nor with spending long years in a *cuadrilla* in submission to the despotism of a *maestro*. He would begin with killing bulls; he would tread the sand of the plazas as a swordsman!

The misfortune of poor Chiripa gave him a certain ascendancy over his companions, and he formed a *cuadrilla* of ragged youths who marched behind him to the *capeas* of the *pueblos*. They respected him because he was braver and better dressed. Some young girls of the street, attracted by the manly beauty of the Little Cobbler, who was now in his eighteenth year, and predisposed by his *coleta*, disputed in noisy competition the honor of taking care of his comely person. Moreover he counted on a patron, an old magistrate who had a weakness for the courage of young bull-fighters and whose friendship infuriated Señora Angustias and caused her to let loose some most indecent expressions which she had learned at the Tobacco Factory in her younger days.

The Little Cobbler dressed himself in suits of English cloth well fitted to the elegance of his figure, and his hat was always resplendent. His friends took scrupulous care of the whiteness of his collars and furbelows, and on certain days he proudly wore on his waistcoat a heavy gold chain, a loan from his respectable friend, that had already figured around the necks of other "boys who were starting out."

He mingled with broken-down bull-fighters; he could pay for the drinks of the old *peones* who recalled the deeds

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

of famous swordsmen. It was believed for a certainty that some protectors were exerting themselves in favor of this "boy," awaiting a propitious occasion for him to make his *début* in a fight of young bullocks in the plaza of Seville.

The Little Cobbler was now a *matador*. One day, at Lebrija, when a lively little young bull came into the plaza, his companions had urged him on to the greatest luck. "Dost thou dare to kill him?" And he killed him! Henceforward, fired by the ease with which he had escaped danger, he went to all the *capeas* in which they announced that a bull was to be killed, and to all the granges where bulls were to be fought to the death.

The proprietor of La Rinconada, a rich farmer with a small bull-ring, was an enthusiast who kept his table set and his hayloft open for all the hungry who wished to divert him by fighting his cattle. Juan went there in days of poverty with other companions, to eat and drink to the health of the rural hidalgo, although it might be at the price of some rough tumbling. They arrived afoot after a two days' tramp and the proprietor, seeing the dusty troop with their bundles of capes, said solemnly:

"Whoever does the best work, I'll buy him a ticket that he may return to Seville on the train."

Two days the lord of the farm spent smoking on the balcony of his plaza while the boys from Seville fought young bulls, being frequently caught and trampled.

He sharply reproved a poorly executed cape-play, and called out, "Get up off the ground, you big coward! Come, give him wine to get him over his fright," when a boy persisted in remaining stretched on the ground after a bull had passed over his body.

BORN FOR THE BULL-RING

The Little Cobbler killed a bull in a manner so much to the liking of the owner that the latter seated him at his table while his comrades stayed in the kitchen with the herders and farm laborers, dipping their horn spoons into the steaming broth.

“Thou hast earned the return by railroad, my brave youth. Thou wilt travel far if thou dost not lose heart. Thou hast promise.”

The Little Cobbler, starting on his return to Seville second class while the *cuadrilla* tramped afoot, thought that a new life was beginning for him, and he cast a look of covetousness at the enormous plantation with its extensive olive orchards, its fields of grain, its mills, its meadows stretching out of sight in which were pasturing thousands of goats, while bulls and cows lay quietly chewing the cud. What wealth! If only he might some day come to possess something like that!

CHAPTER IV

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

GALLARDO'S prowess in fighting young bulls in the *pueblos*, heralded in Seville, caused the restless and insatiable amateurs, ever seeking a new luminary to eclipse those already discovered, to fix their attention upon him.

"He certainly is a boy of wonderful promise," they used to say, on seeing him pass along Sierpes Street with short step, swinging his arms arrogantly. "He must be seen on classic ground." This ground for them and for the Little Cobbler was the ring of the plaza at Seville. The boy was soon to find himself face to face with the real thing. His protector had acquired for him a span-gled costume, somewhat worn, a cast-off of some bull-fighter who had failed to win a name. A *corrida* of young bulls was arranged for a benefit, and influential devotees, eager for novelty, managed to include him in the programme gratuitously, as *matador*.

The son of Señora Angustias declined to appear in the announcements under his nickname of Little Cobbler, which he desired to forget. He would have nothing to do with stage names, and less with menial offices. He wished to be known by the names of his father, he desired to be Juan Gallardo; no nickname should recall his origin to the great people who undoubtedly would become his friends of the future.

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

The whole ward of the Feria flocked *en masse* to the *corrida* with a noisy and patriotic fervor. The dwellers in the ward of Macarena also showed their interest and the other popular wards allowed themselves to be carried away with equal enthusiasm. A new *matador* for Seville! There was not room for all and thousands were left outside the plaza anxiously awaiting the news of the *corrida*.

Gallardo fought, killed, was knocked down by a bull without being hurt, and kept the public in constant anxiety by his daring, which generally resulted fortunately and provoked colossal bellowings of enthusiasm. Certain devotees, esteemed for their opinions, smiled complacently. He had much to learn but he had courage and ambition, which is the important thing.

"Above all, he goes in to really kill 'in classic style,' and he keeps inside the field of reality."

At the opposite side of the plaza the old magistrate smiled compassionately beneath his white beard, admiring the boy's bravery and the fine appearance he made in the spangled costume. When he saw him knocked down by the bull he fell back into his seat as if he were going to faint. That was too much for him.

In one section proudly strutted the husband of Encarnación, Gallardo's sister, a leather-worker by trade, a prudent man, an enemy of vagrancy, who had married the cigarette girl, captured by her charms, but under the express condition of having nothing to do with her scamp of a brother.

Gallardo, offended by his brother-in-law's distrust, had never ventured into his shop, which was situated in the outskirts of Macarena, nor descended from the cere-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

monious *you* when now and then of an afternoon he met him at his mother's house.

"I am going to see how that shameless brother of thine dodges the oranges," he had said to his wife as he set out for the plaza.

And now, from his seat, he bowed to the swordsman, calling him *Juaniyo*, saying *thou*, playing the peacock, content when the young bull-fighter, attracted by the many shouts, saw him at last and returned the greeting with a salute of his sword.

"He is my brother-in-law," said the leather-worker so that those near him might admire him. "I have always known the boy would amount to something at bull-fighting. My wife and I have helped him much."

The finale was triumphal. The multitude rushed impetuously upon Juanillo, as if they were about to devour him by their outbursts of enthusiasm. Fortunately the brother-in-law was present to impose order, to shield him with his body, and to conduct him to the hired coach in which he seated himself at the bull-fighter's side.

When they arrived at the house in the ward of the FERIA an immense crowd was following the carriage with shouts of joy and acclamations of praise that brought the people crowding to the doors. The news of the triumph had reached there ahead of the swordsman and the neighbors ran out to see him and to press his hand.

Señora Angustias and her daughter were at the door. The leather-worker stepped out almost arm in arm with his brother-in-law, monopolizing him, shouting and gesticulating in the name of the family that nobody should touch him, as if he were a sick man.

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

"Here he is, Encarnación," he said, shoving him toward his wife, "Not even Roger de Flor himself —"

And Encarnación had no need to ask more, for she knew that her husband vaguely considered this historic individual the personification of all greatness and that he only ventured to connect his name with portentous circumstances.

Certain enthusiastic neighbors who came from the *corrida* flattered Señora Angustias, crying, "Blessed be the mother that has given birth to such a valiant youth!"

Her friends overwhelmed her with their exclamations. What luck! And what sums of money he soon was going to earn!

The poor woman wore in her eyes an expression of astonishment and doubt. And was it really her little Juan that had made the people run with such enthusiasm? Had they gone mad?

But she suddenly fell upon him as if all the past had vanished; as if her worry and fretting were a dream; as if she confessed a shameful error. Her great flabby arms wound around the bull-fighter's neck and her tears wetted his cheeks.

"My son! Little Juan! If thy poor father could only see thee!"

"Don't cry, mother—for this is a day of joy. You shall see. If God gives me luck I will build you a house and your friends shall see you in a carriage and you shall wear all the Manila shawls you want."

The leather-worker received these promises of greatness with signs of affirmation in the presence of his astonished wife, who had not yet recovered from her surprise at this radical change.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

“Yes, Encarnación; this youth will do it all if he undertakes it. It was extraordinary. Not even Roger de Flor himself — !”

That night in the taverns and *cafés* of the popular wards they talked only of Gallardo. The bull-fighter of the future! He has flourished like the very roses. This boy is going to get away the favors from all the Cordovan caliphs.

In these assertions was revealed Sevillian pride in constant rivalry with the people of Córdoba, which was also a land of good bull-fighters.

Gallardo's existence changed completely from this day. The young gentlemen greeted him and made him sit among them around the doors of the *cafés*. The pretty girls who formerly satisfied his hunger and took care of his adornment, found themselves little by little repelled with smiling disregard. Even the old protector prudently withdrew in view of a certain indifference and bestowed his tender friendship on other boys who were just beginning.

The management of the bull-plaza sought out Gallardo, humoring him as if he were already a celebrity. By announcing his name on the programmes success was assured, the plaza filled. The masses applauded wildly the “boy of Señora Angustias,” giving tongue to tales of his valor. Gallardo's fame extended through Andalusia, and the leather-worker, without being solicited, mixed in everything and played the part of defender of his brother-in-law's interests. A thoughtful and expert man in business, according to himself, he saw the course of his life marked out.

“Thy brother,” he would say to his wife at night as

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

they went to bed, "needs a practical man at his side to manage his interests. Dost thou suppose he would think well of naming me his manager? A great thing for him! Not even Roger de Flor himself! And for us — ?"

The leather-worker contemplated in imagination the great riches Gallardo was going to gain, and he thought also of his own five sons and those that were still to come. Who could tell if what the swordsman earned should fall to his nephews?

For a year and a half Juan killed bullocks in the best plazas of Spain. His fame had reached Madrid. The devotees at the capital felt a curiosity to see the "Sevilian boy" of whom the newspapers talked so much and of whom the "intelligent" Andalusians boasted.

Gallardo, escorted by a group of friends from his native city who were residing in Madrid, strutted along the sidewalk of Seville Street near the Café Inglés. The pretty girls smiled at his compliments and their eyes followed the toreador's heavy gold chain and his big diamond ornaments acquired with his first earnings and on credit — discounting the future. A *matador* must show that he has an overplus of money by decorating his person and treating everybody generously. How far away were those days when he, with poor Chiripa, tramped along that same pavement, afraid of the police, contemplating the bull-fighters with admiration and picking up the stubs of their cigars!

His work in Madrid was lucky. He made friends and formed around him a group of enthusiasts hungry for novelty who also proclaimed him the "bull-fighter of the future" and complained because he had not yet received the "alternative."

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

"He's going to earn money by basketfuls, Encarnación," said the brother-in-law. "He is going to have millions, if he does n't have some bad luck."

The life of the family changed completely. Gallardo, mingling with the young gentlemen of Seville, did not wish his mother to continue living in the house where she had passed her days of poverty. On his account they had moved to a better street in the city, but Señora Angustias inclined to remain faithful to the ward of the Feria, with the love which simple people feel as they grow old for the places where their youth was spent.

They lived in a much better house. The mother did not work and the neighbors paid her homage, finding in her a generous lender in their days of stress. Juan possessed, besides the loud and showy jewels with which he adorned his person, that supreme luxury of every bull-fighter, a powerful sorrel mare, with a cowboy saddle and a fine blanket bordered with multicolored fringe across the pommel. Mounted on her he trotted along the streets with no other object than to receive the homage of his friends, who greeted his elegance with noisy "*Olés!*" This satisfied his desire for popularity for the moment. On other occasions he rode with the young bloods, forming a sightly troop of horsemen, to the pasture of Tablada, on the eve of a great *corrida*, to see the herd that others had to kill.

"When I take the 'alternative,'" he was saying at every step, making all his plans for the future depend on that.

He deferred until then a series of projects that would surprise his mother, poor woman, overcome by the good

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

fortune fallen suddenly upon her house, and which, she thought, could not be surpassed.

The day of the "alternative" came at last, the day of Gallardo's recognition as a killer of bulls. A celebrated *maestro* ceded to him his sword and *muleta* in the open ring of Seville and the crowd went mad with enthusiasm, seeing how he felled with a single sword-thrust the first "formal" bull that appeared before him. The following month, this tauromachic degree was bestowed again in the plaza of Madrid where another *maestro*, not less celebrated, again gave him the "alternative" in a *corrida* of Miura bulls.

He was no longer a *novillero*; he was a *matador*, and his name figured beside those of old swordsmen whom he had worshipped as unapproachable gods when he was going about among the little towns taking part in the bull-baitings. He remembered having lain in wait for one of them at a station near Córdoba to ask aid from him when he passed through on the train with his *cuadrilla*. That night he had something to eat, thanks to the generous fraternity that exists among the people of the queue which impels a swordsman of princely luxury to hand out a *duro* and a cigar to the unfortunate little vagabond on the road to his first *capeas*.

Contracts began to shower upon the new swordsman. In all the plazas of the Peninsula they desired to see him, moved by curiosity. The newspapers devoted to the profession popularized his picture and his life, distorting the latter with novel episodes. No other *matador* had so many engagements. He was going to make money abundantly.

Antonio, his brother-in-law, told of this success with

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

clouded brow and loud protestations to his wife and her mother. The swordsman was an ungrateful fellow—the history of all who rise suddenly. And he had worked so hard for Juan! With what firmness had he argued with the managers when the bullock-fight was arranged for him. And now that he was a *maestro* he had as a manager a gentleman he had met only a short time ago; one Don José who was not one of the family but one for whom Gallardo showed esteem on account of his prestige as an old connoisseur.

“And he will be sorry for it,” he ended, adding, “A man has only one family and where will he find such loving care as we have given him ever since he was little? He is the loser. With me he would flourish like Roger de—”

He interrupted himself, swallowing the famous name for fear of the jokes of the *banderilleros* and amateurs who frequented the house and who had no respect for the historical object of the leather-worker's adoration.

Gallardo, with the generosity of a victor, gave some satisfaction to his brother-in-law by putting him in charge of the house he was having built, with *carte blanche* as to expenses. The swordsman, overcome by the ease with which money came into his hands, was willing to let his brother-in-law rob him, thus compensating him for not having been chosen as manager.

The *torero* was to realize his desire of building a house for his mother. She, poor woman, who had spent her life scrubbing floors for the rich, should have her beautiful courtyard with marble pavements, with tiled wainscot, and rooms with furniture like those of the gentry, with servants, yes, many servants to wait upon her. He

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

also felt united by a traditional affection to the ward where his childish poverty had slipped from him. He rejoiced to outshine the very people who had employed his mother as a servant and to give a handful of *pesetas*, in moments of need, to those who had taken shoes to his father or who had given him a crumb in those sorrowful days. He bought several old houses, one of them the same in whose *portal* the cobbler had worked. He had them torn down and began to build an edifice that was to have white walls with green painted grilles, a vestibule lined with tiles, and a barred gate of delicately wrought iron through which should be seen the courtyard with its fountain in the centre and its marble columns, between which should hang gilded cages with chattering birds.

Antonio's satisfaction at having full license in the direction and profit of the works was diminished somewhat by terrible news,—Gallardo had a sweetheart! He was travelling now in midsummer, running over Spain from one plaza to another, making famous sword-thrusts and receiving applause; but almost daily he sent a letter to a certain girl in the ward and in the short respites between wandering from one *corrida* to another abandoned his companions and took the train to spend the night in Seville, courting her.

"Have you seen?" shouted the leather-worker, scandalized at what was taking place "in the bosom of the home" before the very eyes of his wife and mother-in-law. "A sweetheart! without saying a word to the family, which is the only thing worth while in the whole world! The Señor wants to marry. Without doubt he is tired of us. What a shameless fellow!"

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Encarnación approved these assertions with rude grimaces of her strong, fierce face, content to be able to express herself thus against the brother who filled her with envy by his good fortune. Yes, he had ever been a shameless fellow.

But the mother protested. "No, indeed! I know the girl and her poor mother was a chum of mine in the Factory. She is as pure as nuggets of gold, trim, good, fine-looking. I have already told Juan that it would please me and the sooner the better."

She was an orphan, living with an aunt and uncle who kept a little grocery store in the ward. Her father, an old-time dealer in brandies, had left her two houses on the outskirts of Macarena.

"A little thing," said Señora Angustias, "but the girl does n't come empty-handed. She brings something of her own. And as for clothes — *Josú!* you ought to see her little hands of gold; how she embroiders the clothes, how she is preparing her trousseau."

Gallardo vaguely recollected having played with her when they were children near the *portal* where the cobbler worked while the two mothers chatted. She was a sprightly creature, thin and dark, with eyes of a gypsy — the pupils black and sharply rounded like drops of ink, the corneas bluish white and the corners a pallid rose-hue. In their races she was as agile as a boy and her legs looked like reeds; her hair hung about her head in thick rebellious locks twisting like black snakes. Then she had dropped out of his sight and he did not meet her until many years afterward when he was a *novillero*, and had begun to make a name.

It was one Corpus Christi day — one of the few feasts

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

when the women, shut up in the house through Oriental laziness, go out upon the streets like Moorish women at liberty, wearing *mantillas* of silk lace and carnations on their breasts. Gallardo saw a young girl, tall, slender, and at the same time strongly built, the waist confined in handsome firm curves with all the vigor of youth. Her face, of a rice-like pallor, colored on seeing the bull-fighter; her great luminous eyes hid themselves beneath their long lashes.

"That girl knows me," said Gallardo to himself. "She must have seen me in the ring."

And when, after having followed her and her aunt, he heard that it was Carmen, the companion of his infancy, he was astonished and confused by the marvellous transformation from the dark thin girl of the past. They became sweethearts and all the neighbors discussed their affair, seeing in them a new honor for the neighborhood.

"This is how it is with me," said Gallardo to his enthusiasts, adopting a princely air. "I don't want to imitate other bull-fighters who marry *señoritas* that are all hats and feathers and flounces. For me, those of my own class; a rich *mantilla*, a fine carriage, grace; that's what I want — *Olé!*"

His friends, enraptured, spoke highly of the girl,—a splendid lass, with curves to her body that would set any one wild, and what an air! But the bull-fighter only made a wry face. The less they talked of Carmen the better.

In the evening, as he conversed with her through a grated window, contemplating her Moorish face framed in the flowering vines, the servant of a nearby tavern presented himself, carrying glasses of Andalusian wine

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

on a painted tray. He was the envoy who came to collect the toll, the traditional custom of Seville, which demanded pay from sweethearts who talk through the grille.

The bull-fighter drank a glass, offering another to the girl, and said to the boy:

"Give the gentlemen my thanks, and say I'll come along by the shop after a while. Also tell Montañés to allow no one else to pay, that Juan Gallardo will pay for everybody."

And when he had finished his talk with his betrothed he went into the tavern where he was awaited by the tipplers, some enthusiastic friends, others unknown admirers anxious to toast the health of the bull-fighter in tall glasses of wine.

On returning from his first trip as a full-fledged *matador* he spent the winter evenings close by Carmen's grated window, wrapped in his cape of greenish cloth, which had a narrow collar and was made generously ample, with vines and arabesques embroidered in black silk.

"They say that thou dost drink much," sighed Carmen, pressing her face against the bars.

"Nonsense! Courtesies of friends that one has to return and nothing more. Thou knowest that a bull-fighter is — a bull-fighter, and he is not going to live like a begging friar."

"They say that thou goest with bad women."

"That's a lie! That was in other days, before I met thee. Man alive! I would like to meet the son of a goat that carries thee such tales."

"And when shall we get married?" she continued,

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

cutting off her sweetheart's indignant remarks by a question.

"As soon as the house is finished, and would to God it were to-morrow! That worthless brother-in-law of mine will never get it done. He knows that it's a good thing for him and he is sleeping on his luck."

"I'll set things to rights, Juaniyo, after we are married. Thou shalt see how well everything will run along. Thou shalt see how thy mother loves me."

And so their dialogues continued while waiting for the hour of the wedding which was being talked about all over Seville. Carmen's aunt and uncle and Señora Angustias discussed it whenever they met, but in spite of this the bull-fighter scarcely ever entered the home of his betrothed. They preferred to see one another through the grille, according to custom.

The winter passed. Gallardo mounted his horse and went hunting in the pasture lands of some gentlemen who *thou-ed* him with a protecting air. He must preserve the agility of his body by continual exercise, in preparation for the next bull-fight season. He feared losing his strength and nimbleness.

The most tireless propagandist of his glory was Don José, a gentleman who performed the office of his manager, and always called him *his matador*. He intervened in all Gallardo's affairs, not admitting a better right even to his own family. He lived on his rents with no other occupation than talking about bulls and bull-fighters. For him bull-fights were the only interesting thing in the world and he divided the human race into two classes, the elect nations who had bull-rings, and the dull ones for whom there is no sun, nor joy, nor good Andalusian

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

wine—in spite of which they think themselves powerful and happy though they have never seen even a single ill-fought *corrida* of bullocks.

He brought to his enthusiasm the energy of a warrior and the faith of an inquisitor. Fat, still young, bald, and with a light beard, this father of a family, happy and gay in everyday life, was fierce and stubborn on the benches of a ring when his neighbors expressed opinions contrary to his. He felt himself capable of fighting the whole audience in defence of a bull-fighter friend, and he disturbed the ovations with extemporaneous protests when they were offered to an athlete who failed to enjoy his affection.

He had been a cavalry officer, more from love of horses than of war. His corpulence and his enthusiasm for the bulls had caused him to retire from the service. He spent the summer witnessing bull-fights and the winter talking about them. He was eager to be the guide, the mentor, the manager of a bull-fighter, but all the *maestros* had their own and so the advent of Gallardo was a stroke of fortune for him. The slightest aspersion cast upon the merits of his favorite turned him red with fury and converted the tauromachic dispute into a personal question. He counted it as a glorious act of war to have come to blows in a *café* with a couple of contemptuous amateurs who criticised *his matador* as being too boastful.

He felt as though there were not enough papers printed to publish Gallardo's glory, and on winter mornings he would go and place himself on a corner touched by a ray of sun-light at the entrance of Sierpes Street, and as his friends passed, he would say in a loud voice,

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

"No! there is only one man!" as if he were talking to himself, affecting to not see those who were drawing near. "The greatest man in the world! And let him that thinks to the contrary speak out. The only one!"

"Who?" asked his friends, jestingly, pretending not to understand him.

"Who can it be? Juan!"

"What Juan?"

With a gesture of indignation and surprise he would answer, "What Juan could it be? As if there were many Juans! Juan Gallardo."

"But, man alive," some of them would say to him, "one might think you two lie down together! It is thou, may be, that is going to get married to him?"

"Only because he don't want it so," Don José would stoutly answer, with the fervor of idolatry.

And on seeing other friends approach, he forgot their jibes and continued repeating:

"No! there is only one man. The greatest in the world. And he that does n't believe it let him open his beak, for here am I!"

Gallardo's wedding was a great event. The new house was opened with it—the house of which the leather-worker was so proud, where he showed the courtyard, the columns, the tiles, as if all were the work of his hands.

They were married in San Gil, before the Virgin of Hope, called the Virgin of Macarena. At the church door the hundreds of Chinese shawls embroidered with exotic flowers and birds, in which the bride's friends were draped, glistened in the sunshine.

A deputy to the Cortes stood as best man.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Above the black and white felts of the majority of the guests rose the shining tall hats of the manager and other gentlemen, Gallardo's devotees. All of them smiled with satisfaction at the deference of popularity that was shown them on going about with the bull-fighter.

Alms were given at the door of the house during the day. The poor came even from the distant towns, attracted by the fame of this gorgeous wedding.

There was a great feast in the courtyard. Photographers took instantaneous views for the Madrid newspapers. Gallardo's wedding was a national event. Far into the night guitars strummed with melancholy plaint, accompanied by hand-clapping and the click of castanets. The girls, their arms held high, beat the marble floor with their little feet, whirling their skirts and *mantillas* around their slender bodies, moving with the rhythm characteristic of the *Sevillanas*. Bottles of rich Andalusian wines were uncorked by the dozen; from hand to hand passed cups of ardent sherry, of strong *montilla*, and of the wine of San Lúcar, pale and perfumed. Every one was drunk but their intoxication left them sweet, subdued, and sad, with no other manifestation than sighs and songs, many starting at once to intone melancholy chants that told of prisons, of deaths, and of the poor mother, the eternal theme of the popular songs of Andalusia.

The last guests took their leave at midnight and the bride and groom were left in the house with Señora Augustias. The leather-worker, going out with his wife, made a gesture of desperation. He was drunk and furious because no one had paid him any attention during



Gallardo's wedding was a national event. Far into the night guitars strummed with melancholy plaint. . . . Girls, their arms held high, beat the marble floor with their little feet

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

the entire day. As if he were nobody! As if the family did not exist!

"They cast us out, Encarnación. That girl, with her little face like the Virgin of Hope, is going to be mistress of everything and there won't be even a crumb left for us. Thou shalt see how they will fill the place with children."

And the prolific man grew indignant thinking of Gallardo's future offspring being brought into the world with no other purpose than to harm his own.

Time went on. A year passed without Señor Antonio's prediction being fulfilled. Gallardo and his wife appeared at all the functions with the pomp and show of a rich and popular bridal pair; she with *mantillas* that drew forth screams of admiration from the poor women; he, wearing his brilliants and ever ready to draw out his pocket-book to treat the people and to succor the beggars that came in bands. The gypsies, coppery of skin and chattering like witches, besieged Carmen with happy prophesies. Might God bless her! She was going to have a boy, a little prattling babe, more beautiful than the sun itself. They read it in the white of her eyes.

But in vain Carmen flushed with joy and modesty, lowering her eyes; in vain the *espada* walked erect, proud of his achievements, believing that the coveted fruit would soon appear.

And then another year passed without the realization of their hopes. Señora Angustias was sad when they spoke to her about it. She had other grandchildren, Encarnación's little ones, who by order of the leather-worker spent the day in their grandmother's house trying in every way to please their uncle. But she, wishing to

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

compensate Gallardo for the hardships of the past, prayed with fervent affection for a child of his to care for, yearning to shower upon him all the love she could not give the father in his infancy because of her poverty.

"I know what is the matter," said the old woman sadly, "poor Carmen has no peace of mind. Thou shouldst see that unhappy creature when Juan is travelling about the world."

During the winter, in the season of rest when the bull-fighter was at home or went to the country testing bullocks and joining in the hunt, all was well. Carmen was then content knowing that her husband was in no danger. She laughed on the slightest pretext; she ate heartily; her face was animated by the color of health; but as soon as the spring came and Juan left home to fight bulls in the rings of Spain the poor girl, pale and weak, would fall into a painful stupefaction, her eyes enlarged by fear and ready to shed tears.

"Seventy-two bull-fights this year," said the friends of the house, commenting on the swordsman's contracts. "No one is so sought after as he."

And Carmen smiled with a grimace of pain. Seventy-two afternoons of agony like a criminal doomed to death, awaiting the arrival of the telegram at night-fall and at the same time dreading it! Seventy-two days of terror, of vague superstitions, thinking that a word forgotten in a prayer might influence the luck of the absent one! Seventy-two days of painful paradox, living in a tranquil house, seeing the same people, her accustomed existence running on, calm and peaceful as though nothing extraordinary were happening in the world, hearing the play of her husband's nephews in the courtyard and the

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

flower-seller's song on the street, while far, very far away, in unknown cities, her Juan, in the presence of thousands of eyes, fought with wild beasts, seeing death pass close to his breast at each movement of the red rag he held in his hands!

Ah! those days of bull-fights, feast-days, on which the sky seemed more beautiful and the once solitary street resounded beneath the feet of the holiday crowd, when guitars strummed with accompaniment of hand-clapping and song in the tavern at the corner. Carmen, plainly dressed, with her *mantilla* over her eyes, left the house as if fleeing from evil dreams, going to take refuge in the churches. Her simple faith, which uncertainty burdened with superstitions, made her go from altar to altar as she recalled to mind the merits and miracles of each image. She went to San Gil, the church that had seen the happiest day of her existence, she knelt before the Virgin of Macarena, provided candles, many candles, and by their ruddy glow contemplated the brown face of the image with its black eyes and long lashes, which, it was said, resembled her own. In her she trusted. For a good reason was she Our Lady of Hope. Surely at this very hour she was protecting Juan by her divine power.

But suddenly indecision and fear rudely burst through her beliefs, tearing them asunder. The Virgin was a woman and women are so weak! Her destiny was to suffer and weep, as she wept for her husband, as the other had wept for her Son. She must confide in stronger powers; she must implore the aid of a more vigorous protection. And, in the stress of her agony, abandoning the Macarena without scruple as a useless friendship is for-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

gotten, she went at other times to the church of San Lorenzo in search of Jesus, He of the Great Power, the Man-God crowned with thorns with the cross on his back, sweaty and tearful, the work of the sculptor Montañés, an awe-inspiring image.

The dramatic sadness of the Nazarene stumbling against the stones and bent beneath the weight of the cross seemed to console the poor wife. Lord of the Great Power! This vague and grandiose title tranquilized her. If the god dressed in brown velvet and gold would but deign to listen to her sighs, to her prayers repeated in eager haste, with dizzy rapidity, she was sure that Juan would walk unscathed out of the ring where he was at that moment. Again she would give money to a sacristan to light candles, and she passed hours contemplating the vacillating reflection of the red tongues on the image, believing she saw in the varnished face, by these alternations of shade and light, smiles of consolation, kind expressions that promised felicity.

The Lord of Great Power did not deceive her. On her return to the house she was presented with the little blue paper which she opened with a trembling hand: "*As usual.*" She could breathe again, she could sleep like the criminal that is freed for the instant from immediate death; but in two or three days again came the agony of uncertainty, the terrible torture of doubt.

Carmen, in spite of the love she professed for her husband, had hours of rebellion. If she had known what this existence was before she married! At certain moments, craving the sisterhood of pain, she went in search of the wives of the bull-fighters who figured in Juan's *cuadrilla*, hoping they could give her news.

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

Nacional's good woman, who kept a tavern in the same ward, received the master's wife with tranquillity, wondering at her fears. She was accustomed to such an existence. Her husband must be all right since he sent no word. Telegrams cost dear and a *banderillero* earns little. If the newsboys did not shout an accident it was because none had happened. And she continued attentive to the service of her establishment as if no trace of worry could make its way into her blunted sensibility.

Again, crossing the bridge, Carmen went to the ward of Triana in search of the wife of Potaje, the *picador*, a kind of gypsy that lived in a hut like a hen-house surrounded by coppery, dirty youngsters whom she threatened and terrified with stentorian yells. The visit of the master's wife filled her with pride, but the latter's anxiety almost made her laugh. She ought not to be afraid. Those on foot always escaped the bull and Señor Juan Gallardo's good angel watched over him when he threw himself upon the beasts. The bulls killed but few. The terrible thing was being thrown from the horse. It was known to be the end of all *picadores* after a life of horrible falls; those who did not die suddenly from an unforeseen and thundering accident finished their days in madness. Thus poor Potaje would die — and so many hard struggles in exchange for a handful of *duros*,— while others —

This last she did not say but her eyes revealed the protest against the favoritism of Fate for those fine youths who, by a thrust of the sword, took the applause, the popularity, and the money, with no greater risks than those faced by their humbler associates.

Little by little Carmen grew accustomed to this new life. The cruel suspense on bull-fight days, the visits

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

to the saints, the superstitious fears, she accepted them all as incidents necessary to her existence. Moreover, her husband's good luck and the continual conversation in the house on the events of the contest finally familiarized her with the danger. The fierce bull became for her as for Gallardo a generous and noble beast come into the world with no other purpose than to enrich and give fame to those who kill him.

She never attended a bull-fight. Since that afternoon on which she saw him who was to be her husband in his first *novillada*, she had not returned to the plaza. She lacked courage to witness a bull-fight, even one in which Gallardo did not take part. She would faint with terror on seeing other men face the danger dressed in the same costume as her Juan.

In the third year of their marriage Gallardo was wounded at Valencia. Carmen did not know it at once. The telegram arrived on time with the customary, "*As usual.*" It was a merciful act of Don José, the manager, who, visiting Carmen every day and resorting to skilful jugglery to prevent her reading the papers, put off her knowledge of the misfortune for a week.

When Carmen heard of it through the indiscretion of some neighbor women she wished to take the train immediately to go to her husband, to take care of him, for she imagined him abandoned. It was not necessary. Before she could start the swordsman arrived, pale from the loss of blood, and with one leg doomed to a long season of immobility, but happy and anxious to tranquillize his family. The house was from that time a kind of sanctuary, hundreds passing through the courtyard to greet Gallardo, "the greatest man in the world," seated there

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

in a big willow chair with his leg on a tabourette and smoking as tranquilly as though his body were not torn by an atrocious wound.

Doctor Ruiz, who came with him to Seville, prophesied that he would be well before a month, marvelling at the energy of his constitution. The facility with which bull-fighters were cured was a mystery to him in spite of his long practice of surgery. The horn, dirty with blood and animal excrement, often breaking into splinters at the blow, tore the flesh, scratched it, perforated it, making at once a deep penetrating injury and a bruised contusion, and yet these atrocious wounds healed with greater ease than those in ordinary life.

"I don't know what it is, this mystery," said the old surgeon with an air of doubt. "Either those boys have got the flesh of a dog, or else the horn, with all its filth, carries a curative virtue that is unknown to us."

A short time afterward, Gallardo went back to bull-fighting, his ardor uncooled by the accident, contrary to the prediction of his enemies.

Four years after his marriage the swordsman gave his wife and mother a great surprise. They were becoming landed proprietors, yea, proprietors on a great scale, with lands "stretching beyond view," with olive orchards, mills, great flocks and herds, and a plantation like those of the rich gentlemen of Seville.

Gallardo experienced the desire of all bull-fighters, who long to be lords over lands, breeders of horses, and owners of herds of cattle. Urban wealth? No. Values in paper do not tempt them nor do they understand them. The bull makes them think of the green meadow; the horse recalls the country to their minds. The continual

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

necessity of movement and exercise, the hunt, and constant travel during the winter months, cause them to desire the possession of land. According to Gallardo the only rich man was he who owned a plantation and great herds of animals. Since his days of poverty, when he had tramped along the roads through olive orchards and pasture grounds, he had nursed his fervent desire to possess leagues and leagues of land, enclosed with barbed-wire fences against the depredation of other men.

His manager knew these desires. Don José it was who took charge of his affairs, collecting the money from the ring-managers and carrying an account that he tried in vain to explain to his *matador*.

"I don't understand that music," said Gallardo, content in his ignorance, "I only know how to despatch bulls. Do whatever you wish, Don José; I have confidence in you and I know that you do everything for my good." So Don José, who scarcely ever thought about his own property, leaving it to the weak administration of his wife, occupied himself at all hours with the bull-fighter's fortune, placing his money at interest with the heart of a usurer to make it fruitful. One day he fell upon his client joyfully.

"I have what thou desirest, a plantation like a world, and besides, it is very cheap; a regular bargain. Next week we will get it into writing."

Gallardo was eager to know the name and situation of the plantation.

"It is called La Rinconada."

His desires were fulfilled! When Gallardo went with his wife and mother to take possession of the plantation

AT CARMEN'S WINDOW-GRILLE

he showed them the hayloft where he had slept with the companions of his wandering misery, the room in which he had dined with the master, and the little plaza where he had stabbed a calf, earning for the first time the right to travel by train without having to hide beneath the seats.

CHAPTER V

THE LURE OF GOLDEN HAIR

ON winter evenings when Gallardo was not at La Rinconada, a company of friends gathered in the dining-room of his house after supper. Among the first arrivals were the leather-worker and his wife, who always had two of their children in the swordsman's home. Carmen, wishing to forget her barrenness and oppressed by the silence of the great dwelling, kept her sister-in-law's youngest children with her most of the time. They, partly from spontaneous affection and partly by command of their parents, affectionately caressed with kissings and cat-like purrings their handsome aunt and their generous and popular uncle.

When Nacional came to spend an hour with them, although the visit was rather a matter of duty, the circle was always enlivened. Gallardo, dressed in a rich jacket like a country gentleman, his head uncovered, and his *coleta* smooth and shiny, received his *banderillero* with waggish amiability. What were the devotees saying? What lies were they circulating? How was the republic coming along?

"Garabato, give Sebastián a glass of wine."

But Nacional refused this courtesy. No wine for him! He did not drink. Wine was to blame for the failures of the laboring class; and the whole party on hearing this broke out into a laugh, as though he had made some

THE LURE OF GOLDEN HAIR

witty remark which they had been expecting. Then the *banderillero* began to be entertaining.

The only one who remained silent, with hostile eyes, was the leather-worker. He hated Nacional, regarding him as an enemy. He also was prolific in his fidelity, as befits a man of good principles, so that a swarm of young children buzzed about the little tavern clinging to the mother's skirts. Gallardo and his wife had been god-parents to the two youngest, thus uniting the swordsman and the *banderillero* in the relationship of *compadres*. Hypocrite! Every Sunday he brought the two god-children, dressed in their best, to kiss the hand of their sponsors in baptism, and the leather-worker paled with indignation whenever he saw Nacional's children receive a present. They came to rob his own. Maybe the *banderillero* even dreamt that a part of the swordsman's fortune might fall into the hands of these god-children. Thief! A man who was not of the family!

When he did not receive Nacional's words in silence and with looks of hatred he tried to censure him, showing himself in favor of the immediate shooting of all who stir up rebellion and are in consequence a danger to good citizens.

Nacional was ten years older than the *maestro*. When Gallardo began to fight in the *capeas* he was already a *banderillero* in professional *cuadrillas* and he had been to America where he had killed bulls in the plaza at Lima. At the beginning of his career he enjoyed a certain popularity on account of being young and agile. He had also shone for a few days as "the bull-fighter of the future," and the Sevillian connoisseurs, their eyes upon him, expected him to eclipse the bull-fighters from other

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

lands. But this lasted only a short while. On his return from his travels with the prestige of hazy and distant exploits, the populace rushed to the bull-plaza of Seville to see him kill. Thousands were unable to get in; but at the moment of final trial "he lacked heart," as the amateurs said. He lodged the *banderillas* with skill, like a conscientious and serious workman who fulfils his duty, but when he went in to kill the instinct of self-preservation, stronger than his will, kept him at a distance from the bull and prevented his taking advantage of his stature and his strong arm. Nacional renounced the highest glories of tauromachy. *Banderillero*, nothing more! He resigned himself to be a journeyman of his art, serving others younger than himself and earning a meagre salary as a *peón* to support his family and lay by some scanty savings to establish a small industry by and by. His kindness and his honest habits were proverbial among the people of the *coleta*. The wife of his *matador* was fond of him, believing him a kind of guardian angel of her husband's fidelity.

When, in summer, Gallardo with all his people went to a music hall in some provincial capital, eager for gambling and sport after having despatched the bulls in several *corridos*, Nacional remained silent and grave among the singing girls with their gauzy dress and their painted lips, like an anchorite from the desert in the midst of the courtesans of Alexandria. He was not scandalized but he grew sad thinking of the wife and children that waited for him in Seville. All defects and corruptions in the world were, in his opinion, the result of lack of education. Of course those poor women did not know how to read and write. The same was true of himself and, as he

THE LURE OF GOLDEN HAIR

attributed his insignificance and poverty of intellect to that, he laid all misery and degradation in the world to the same cause. In his early youth he had been an iron-founder and an active member of the International Workmen's Union, an assiduous listener to his more fortunate fellow-workmen who could read in a loud voice what the newspapers said of the welfare of the people. He played at soldiering in the days of the national militia, figuring in the battalions which wore the red cap as the sign of being implacable federalist propagandists. He spent whole days before the platforms raised in the public squares, where various societies declared themselves in permanent session and orators succeeded one another day and night, haranguing with Andalusian fluency about the divinity of Jesus and the increase in the price of articles of prime necessity, until, when hard times came, a strike left him in the trying situation of the workman black-listed on account of his ideas, finding himself turned away from every shop.

He liked bull-fighting and he became a *torero* at twenty-four, just as he might have chosen any other trade. He, moreover, knew a great deal and talked with contempt of the absurdities of the present state of society. Not for nothing does one spend years hearing the papers read! However ill he might fare at bull-fighting he would surely earn more and have an easier life than if he were a skilled workman. The people, remembering the time when he shouldered the musket of the popular militia, nicknamed him Nacional.

He spoke of the taurine profession with a certain regret, in spite of the years he had spent therein, and he apologized for belonging to it. The committee of his

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

district, who had decreed the expulsion of all who attended bull-fights on account of their barbarous and retrograding influence, had made an exception in his favor, retaining him as an active member in good standing.

"I know," he said in Gallardo's dining-room, "that this business of the bulls is a reactionary thing — something belonging to the times of the Inquisition; I don't know whether I explain myself. The people need to learn to read and write as much as they need bread and it is not well for them to spend their money on us while they so greatly lack schooling. That is what the papers that come from Madri' say. But the club members appreciate me, and the committee, after a long preachment from Don Joselito, have agreed to keep me on the roll of membership."

Don Joselito, the school teacher and chairman of the committee of the district, was a learned young man of Israelitish extraction who brought to the political struggle the ardor of the Maccabees and was undistressed by his brown ugliness and his small-pox scars because they gave him a certain likeness to Danton. Nacional always listened to him open-mouthed.

When Don José, Gallardo's business manager, and other friends of the master, jokingly disputed his doctrines at those after-dinner gatherings, making extravagant objections, poor Nacional was in suspense, scratching his forehead from perplexity.

"You are gentlemen and have studied and I don't know how to read or write. That is why we of the lower class are like sheep. But if only Don Joselito were here! By the life of the blue dove! If you could hear him when he lets loose and talks like an angel!"

THE LURE OF GOLDEN HAIR

To fortify his faith, somewhat weakened by the assaults of the jokers, he would go the following day to see Don Joselito, who seemed to luxuriate in bitterness, as a descendant of the persecuted chosen people, and look over what Joselito called his museum of horrors. The Hebrew, returned to the native land of his forefathers, was collecting relics of the Inquisition in a room of the school, with the vengeful accuracy of a prisoner who might reconstruct bone by bone the skeleton of his jailor. In a bookcase stood rows of parchment tomes — decrees of sentences pronounced by the Inquisition and catechisms for interrogating the offender undergoing torture. On one wall hung a white banner with the dreaded green cross. In the corners were heaped instruments of torture — frightful scourges and fiendish devices for cleaving, for stripping and tearing human flesh, that Don Joselito found in the shops of the curio-dealers and catalogued as ancient belongings of the Holy Office. Nacional's kind and simple soul, easily roused to anger, rose in rebellion at the sight of these rusty irons and green crosses.

“Man alive! And yet there are those that say — ! By the life of the dove! I would like to see some folks here!”

Often in summer, when the *cuadrilla* was going from one province to another and Gallardo went into the second class carriage in which “the boys” were travelling, some rural priest or pair of friars would get on board. The *banderilleros* would nudge each other with their elbows and wink one eye looking at Nacional, who seemed even more grave and solemn in the presence of the enemy. The *picadores*, Potaje and Tragabuches, lusty ag-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

gressive fellows, lovers of riots and fights who felt a decided aversion to the ecclesiastical dress, urged him on in a loud voice.

"There's thy chance! Go at him for the good cause! Lodge one of thy yarns in the nape of his neck."

The *maestro*, with all his authority as chief of *cuadrilla*, against which none may parley nor argue, rolled his eyes, and looked at Nacional, who maintained a silent obedience. But stronger than duty was the impulse of his simple soul to convert, and an insignificant word was enough to open a discussion with the travellers, to try to convince them of the truth; and the truth was for him a kind of confused and disordered remnant of arguments learned from Don Joselito.

His comrades looked at each other astonished at the wisdom of their companion, well pleased that one of them should face professional people and put them in a tight place, for they were almost invariably priests of little learning. And the holy men, astounded at Nacional's confused reasoning and the smiles of the other bull-fighters, finally resorted to an extreme measure. Did men who continually exposed their lives to peril take no thought of God and believe in such things as he said? At this very moment how their wives and mothers must be praying for them!

The men of the *cuadrilla* grew serious, thinking with timorous gravity of the scapularies and medallions feminine hands had sewed to their fighting garments before they left Seville. The *matador*, his sleeping superstition aroused, was angry with Nacional, as though in this lack of piety he foresaw danger to his life.

"Keep still and don't talk any more of your crudities.

THE LURE OF GOLDEN HAIR

Pardon, Señores! He is a good man but his head has been turned by so many lies. Shut up and don't give me any impertinence. Damn it all!"

And Gallardo, to tranquillize these gentlemen whom he believed to be trustees of the future, overwhelmed the *banderillero* with threats and curses.

Nacional took refuge in disdainful silence. All ignorance and superstition! All from lack of knowing how to read and write! And firm in his beliefs, with the simplicity of a man who possesses only two or three ideas and will not let go of them, he took up the discussion again in a few hours—paying no heed to the anger of the *matador*.

He carried his impiety even into the midst of the ring, among *peones* and pikemen who, after having said a prayer in the chapel of the plaza, went into the arena with the hope that the sacred emblems sewed to their clothing would deliver them from danger.

When the time came to stick the barbs into some enormous bull of great weight, thick neck, and deep black color, Nacional stood up before him with his arms extended and the barbs in his hands, shouting insults at him:

"Come on, you old priest!"

The "priest" dashed forward furiously, and as he approached, Nacional lodged the *banderillas* in the nape of his neck with all his strength, saying in a loud voice, as if he had gained a victory:

"For the clergy!"

Gallardo ended by laughing at Nacional's extravagances.

"Thou makest me ridiculous. Our *cuadrilla* will be branded as a herd of heretics. Thou knowest that some

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

audiences don't like that. The bull-fighter should only fight bulls."

Nevertheless, he loved his *banderillero*, mindful of his attachment which had sometimes risen to the point of sacrifice. Nacional cared not if he were hissed when he lodged the *banderillas* carelessly in dangerous bulls as a result of his desire to get through quickly. He cared nothing for glory and only fought bulls for his wage. But the moment Gallardo walked sword in hand toward a treacherous bull the *banderillero* kept near him, ready to aid him with his heavy cape and his strong arm which had humbled the necks of so many wild beasts. Twice when Gallardo rolled on the sand, nearly caught by the dagger-like horns, Nacional threw himself upon the animal forgetting his wife, his children, his little tavern, everything, ready to die to save his *maestro*. He was received in Gallardo's dining-room in the evenings, therefore, as though he were a member of the family.

Gallardo and Don José, who sat across the table smoking, the glass of cognac within reach of the hand, liked to start Nacional to talking so as to laugh at his ideas, and they teased him by insulting Don Joselito — a liar who turned the heads of the ignorant!

The *banderillero* took the jokes of the swordsman and his manager calmly. Doubt Don Joselito? Such an absurdity could not move him — no more than if they should attack his other idol, Gallardo, telling him he did not know how to kill a bull.

But when the leather-worker, who inspired him with an irresistible aversion, began to joke him he lost composure. Who was that hungry fellow who lived by hang-

THE LURE OF GOLDEN HAIR

ing onto his master, to dare to dispute him! And losing self-command, forgetting the presence of the master's wife and mother and of Encarnación, who, imitating her husband, curled her be-whiskered lip and looked scornfully at the *banderillero*, he rushed down grade into an exposition of his views with the same fervor with which he discoursed in the committee. For lack of better arguments he overwhelmed the ideas of the jokers with insults.

"The Bible? *Liquid!* That nonsense about creation of the world in six days? *Liquid!* That about Adam and Eve? *Liquid*, also! All lies and superstition."

And the word *liquid*, applied to whatever he believed false or insignificant, fell from his lips as a strong expression of scorn. "That about Adam and Eve" was for him a subject of sarcasm. How could all human beings be descendants from one pair only?

"My name is Sebastián Venegas; and thou, Juaniyo, thy name is Gallardo; and you, Don José, have your surname; and every one has his own, only those of the parents being alike. If we were all grandchildren of Adam, and Adam, for example, was named Pérez, we would all have Pérez for a surname. Is that clear? But every one of us has his own because there were many Adams and what the priests tell is all *liquid!* Superstition and ignorance! We lack education and they deceive us; I think I explain myself."

Gallardo, throwing himself back with laughter, saluted his *banderillero*, imitating the bellowing of a bull. The business manager, with Andalusian gravity, offered him his hand, congratulating him.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

"Shake, old boy! Thou hast done well! Not even Castelar could have done better!"

Señora Angustias was indignant at hearing such things in her house, horrified with the terror of an old woman who sees the end of her existence drawing near.

"Shut up, Sebastián; shut thy big, wicked mouth, lost soul, or into the street thou goest! Thou shalt not say those things here, thou devil! If I did not know thee — If I did not know that thou art a good man —"

Finally she became reconciled to the *banderillero*, remembering how much he loved her Juan and what he had done for him in moments of danger. Moreover, it gave her and Carmen great ease of mind to know that this serious man of decent habits worked in the *cuadrilla* by the side of the other "boys" and of the *matador* himself, who, when he was alone, was excessively gay in disposition and let himself be carried away by the desire to be admired by women.

The enemy of the clergy and of Adam and Eve guarded a secret of his *maestro*, however, that made him reserved and grave when he saw him at home with his mother and Señora Carmen. If these women knew what *he* knew!

In spite of the respect which every *banderillero* should show his *matador* Nacional had dared one day to talk to Gallardo with rough frankness, relying on his years and on their old friendship.

"Be careful, Juauiyo, for everybody in Seville knows the whole story! They talk of nothing else and the news is going to reach your house and there'll be such a riot it'll set fire to the hair of God himself — Don't forget about that affair with the singing girl; and that

THE LURE OF GOLDEN HAIR

was nothing! This creature is more forceful and more dangerous."

"But what creature is that? And what riots are those thou art talking about?"

"Who can it be? Doña Sol; that great lady who makes so much talk. The niece of the Marquis of Moraima, the cattle-breeder."

And as the swordsman was smiling and silent, flattered by Nacional's exact information, the latter continued with the air of a preacher proclaiming the vanities of this world, "The married man should above all things seek the tranquillity of his house. Women! *Liquid!* They are all alike and it is nonsense to embitter one's life jumping from one to another. I am a married man and in the twenty-four years I have lived with my Teresa I have never been faithless to her even in thought, although I am a bull-fighter; and I had my day and more than one lass has cast tender eyes at me."

Gallardo burst out laughing at his *banderillero*. He talked like a father-superior. And was this the same man that wanted to eat the priests up raw?

"Nacional, don't be hard on me. Every one is what he is and since the women come, let them come. What does one live for? Any day he may go out of the ring foot foremost. Besides, thou knowest nothing of the affair, nor what a lady is. If thou couldst see that woman!"

Then he ingenuously added, as if he wished to counteract the expression of scandal and sadness engraved on Nacional's countenance:

"I love Carmen very much, dost thou understand? I love her as well as ever; but the other I love too. That

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

is different. I don't know how to explain it to thee. That's another matter. Drop it!"

And the *banderillero* could make no further headway in his expostulation with Gallardo.

Months before, when with the autumn came the end of the bull-fighting season, the swordsman had had an adventure at the Church of San Lorenzo. He was resting in Seville a few days before going to La Rinconada with his family. To kill more than a hundred bulls a year with all the danger and strain of the contest did not weary him so much as the ceaseless travel from one end of Spain to the other during a period of several months. These journeys were made in mid-summer, under a blistering sun, over parched plains and in old cars whose roofs seemed to be on fire. The water-jar belonging to the *cuadrilla*, filled at every station, was not enough to quench the thirst. Moreover, the trains ran crowded with passengers — people going to the fairs in the cities to see the bull-fights. Often Gallardo, for fear of missing the train, killed his last bull in one plaza, and, still dressed in his fighting costume, rushed to the train, passing like a meteor of light and color among the groups of travellers and baggage trucks, and changed his clothes in a first-class compartment under the gaze of the passengers, who were glad to travel with a celebrity.

When he arrived, worn-out, at some city where the streets were in festal array, decorated with banners and arches, he had to endure the torment of enthusiastic adoration. The connoisseurs and his personal adherents met him at the station and accompanied him to his hotel. They were well-rested and happy folk who grasped him by the hand and expected to find him expansive and

THE LURE OF GOLDEN HAIR

loquacious, as though on meeting them he must perforce experience the greatest pleasure.

Frequently a single *corrida* was not all. He had to fight bulls three or four days in succession, and when night came, exhausted from weariness and lack of sleep on account of his recent excitement, he gave up all social affairs and sat at the door of the hotel in his shirt-sleeves, enjoying the fresh air of the street. The "boys" of the *cuadrilla* lodged at the same inn and kept near the *maestro*, like a brotherhood in a cloister. Some of the most audacious would ask permission to take a walk along the illuminated streets and out to the fair grounds.

"Miuras to-morrow!" said the *matador*. "I know what those walks are. Thou wilt return at day-break with two glasses too many and thou'lt not fail to have some kind of an affair to take thy strength. No; thou canst not go. When we get through thou mayest play."

And the work over, if there were a few days of liberty before the next *corrida* in some other city, the *cuadrilla* would put off the trip, and then the gay time would begin, far from the restraint of their families, with abundance of wine and women in company with enthusiastic devotees, who imagined this to be the everyday life of their idols.

The divers dates of the *fiestas* obliged the swordsman to take absurd journeys. He would leave one city to work in the other extreme of Spain, and four days later he would return, fighting bulls in a town near the first one. He almost spent the summer months, when *corridas* were most frequent, in the train, making a continual zig-zag over all the railroads of the Peninsula, killing bulls in the plazas, and sleeping on the cars.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

"If all my summer travel were arranged in a straight line," said Gallardo, "it would sure reach to the North Pole."

At the beginning of the season he started on his travels with enthusiasm, thinking of the multitude that talked of him throughout the whole year, impatiently awaiting his coming; he thought of the unforeseen events; of the adventures that feminine curiosity would frequently yield him; of the life from hotel to hotel, with its changes, its annoyances, its varied meals, that contrasted strongly with the placid existence in Seville and the days of mountain solitude at La Rinconada. But after a few weeks of this giddy life, in which he earned five thousand *pesetas* for each afternoon of work, Gallardo began to lament, like a child far from its family.

"Ah! My cool house in Seville! Poor Carmen who keeps it shining like a little silver cup! Ah! *Mamita's* cooking! So rich!"

He only forgot Seville on holiday nights, when he did not have to fight bulls the following day; when all the *cuadrilla*, surrounded by devotees anxious to give them a good impression of the city, gathered at a *café flamenco* where women and songs were all for the *maestro*.

When Gallardo went home to recuperate during the remainder of the year he felt the satisfaction of the mighty who, forgetting honors, give themselves up to the comforts of ordinary life.

He slept late, free from the tyranny of train schedules and unstirred by any emotion when he thought of bulls. Nothing to do this day, nor the next, nor the next! His travel ended at Sierpes Street, or the plaza of San Fernando. The family seemed changed, happier and in

THE LURE OF GOLDEN HAIR

better health, having him safe at home for a few months. He went out with his hat on the back of his head, twirling his gold-headed cane and admiring the big brilliants on his fingers. In the vestibule some men were waiting for him,—sun-browned men with a sour, sweaty, stench, wearing dirty blouses and broad hats with ragged rims. Some were field laborers out on a tramp, who thought it quite natural on passing through Seville to obtain help from the famous *matador* whom they called Señor Juan. Others lived in the city, and *thou*-ed the bull-fighter, calling him Juaniyo.

Gallardo, with a memory for faces characteristic of a public man, recognized them and permitted their familiarity. They were comrades of his few school days or his youthful vagabondage.

“Business not going well, eh? Times are hard for everybody.”

And before this friendliness could encourage them to greater intimacy he turned to Garabato who stood holding the gate open.

“Tell the *señora* to give thee a couple of *pesetas* for each one.”

Then he went out into the street whistling, pleased with his generosity and the beauty of his life. He was detained on the next block by a couple of old women, friends of his mother, who asked him to stand as godfather to the grandchild of one of them. Her poor daughter was about to become a mother at any moment; her son-in-law, an ardent Gallardist, had come to blows several times going out of the plaza in defence of his idol but dared not speak to him.

“But, damn it! Do you take me for the director of an

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

orphan asylum? I've got more godchildren than there are in the poor-house."

To rid himself of them he told them to see his *mamita*. Whatever she said should stand! And he went on, not stopping until he reached Sierpes Street, bowing to some and giving others the honor of walking at his side in glorious intimacy before the gaze of the passersby.

He looked in at the Forty-five Club, to see if his manager were there. This was an aristocratic society of a limited membership, as its title indicated, in which the talk was only of bulls and horses. It was composed of gentlemen-amateurs and cattle-breeders, the Marquis of Moraima figuring preëminently, like an oracle.

On one of these walks, one afternoon, Gallardo found himself sauntering along Sierpes Street, and took a notion to enter the parish chapel of San Lorenzo. In the little square before it stood luxurious carriages. On this day the best families were wont to pray to the miraculous image of Our Lord Jesus of the Great Power. Ladies stepped out of the coaches, dressed in black, with rich *mantillas*; and men went into the church attracted by the feminine assemblage.

Gallardo entered also. A bull-fighter must take advantage of opportunities to rub elbows with persons of high position. The son of Señora Angustias felt the pride of a conqueror when rich gentlemen bowed to him and elegant ladies murmured his name, turning their eyes upon him. Moreover, he was a devotee of the Lord of the Great Power. He tolerated in Nacional his opinions on "God or Nature" without being much shocked, for the Divinity meant for him something vague and indefinite, like the existence of a great lord about whom one might

THE LURE OF GOLDEN HAIR

listen calmly to all kinds of blasphemy, because he is only known by hearsay. But the Virgin of Hope and Jesus of the Great Power he had been accustomed to seeing since his earliest years, and these must not be maligned. The susceptibilities of the lusty youth were touched by the theatrical agony of the Christ with the cross on his back, the sweaty countenance, painful and livid like that of comrades he had seen stretched out in the infirmaries of the bull-plazas. He must be on good terms with this powerful lord and he fervently uttered several *pater-nosters*, standing before the image, with the candles like red stars reflected in the corneas of his Moorish eyes.

A movement among the women kneeling before him distracted his attention, which had been absorbed in a plea for supernatural intervention whenever his life should be in danger.

A lady passed among the worshippers, attracting their notice; she was a tall, slender woman, of astounding beauty, dressed in light colors and wearing a great hat with plumes beneath which shone the luminous gold of her abundant hair.

Gallardo knew her. It was Doña Sol, the Marquis of Moraima's niece, the "Ambassadress," as they called her in Seville. She passed among the women paying no attention to their movements of curiosity, satisfied to win their glances and to hear the murmur of their words as though this were a natural homage that should follow her appearance in any public place. The foreign elegance of her dress and her enormous hat were outlined in their showy splendor against the dark mass of feminine toilettes. She knelt, inclined her head as if in

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

prayer for a few moments, and then her light eyes of greenish blue, with their reflections of gold, roved about the temple tranquilly as though she were in a theatre examining the audience, searching for familiar faces. Those eyes seemed to smile when they encountered the face of a friend and persisted in their roving until they met Gallardo's, which were fixed upon her. The *matador* was not modest. Accustomed to being himself the object of contemplation of thousands and thousands of persons on bull-fight afternoons, he might well believe that, wherever he was, the looks of all must of course be meant for him. Many women, in hours of confidence, had revealed to him their emotion, the curiosity and desire they felt on seeing him for the first time in the ring. Doña Sol's gaze did not fall as it met the bull-fighter's; instead it remained fixed, with the frigidity of a great lady, obliging the *matador*, ever respectful to the rich, to turn his eyes away.

"What a woman!" thought Gallardo, with the petulance of a popular idol. "Can that *gachí* be for me?"

Outside of the church he felt a desire to wait, and he remained near the door. His heart warned him of something extraordinary, as on afternoons when good fortune was coming. It was that mysterious presentiment which in the ring made him deaf to the protests of the public, throwing himself headlong into the greatest dangers, and always with excellent results. When she came out of the church she again looked at him strangely, as if she had guessed that he would be waiting for her. She stepped into an open carriage accompanied by two friends, and when the coachman drove away she still turned her head to see the bull-fighter, a faint smile on her lips.

THE LURE OF GOLDEN HAIR

Gallardo was distracted the remainder of the afternoon — thinking of his former love affairs, of the triumphs of admiration and curiosity that his bull-fighter's arrogance had won for him; conquests that filled him with pride and made him think himself irresistible, but which now inspired him with a kind of shame. A woman like that, a great lady, who had travelled about the world and lived in Seville like an unthroned queen! That would be a conquest! To his admiration of beauty was united a certain reverence derived from ancient servitude, of respect for the rich in a country where birth and fortune possess great importance. If he should manage to claim the attention of that woman, what a tremendous triumph!

CHAPTER VI

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

DON JOSÉ, firm friend of the Marquis of Moraima, and related to the best families of Seville, had often talked to Gallardo concerning Doña Sol.

She had returned to Seville only a few months before, arousing the enthusiasm of the young people. She came, after a long absence in foreign lands, eager for everything pertaining to *la tierra*, enjoying the popular customs and finding it all very interesting, "very artistic." She went to the bull-fights arrayed in the ancient costume of a *maja*, imitating the dress and pose of the beautiful women painted by Goya. Strong, accustomed to sports, and a great horsewoman, the people saw her galloping around the outskirts of Seville, wearing with her black riding skirt a man's jacket, a red cravat, and a white beaver hat perched on top of her golden hair. Sometimes she carried a spear across the pommel of the saddle and with a party of friends converted into *piqueros*, she went to the pasture grounds to tease and upset bulls, enjoying this wild festivity, abounding as it did in danger. She was not a child. Gallardo had a confused recollection of having seen her in his youth on the *paseo* of Delicias, seated beside her mother and covered with white frills, like a luxurious doll in a show-case, while he, a miserable vagabond, dashed under the wheels of the carriage in search of cigar stubs. They were undoubtedly the same

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

age,—she must be at the end of the twenties; but how magnificent! So different from other women! She seemed like an exotic bird, a bird of paradise, fallen into a farmyard among mere shiny, well fed hens.

Don José knew her history. An eccentric mind had Doña Sol! Her mother was dead and she had a considerable fortune. She had married in Madrid a certain man older than herself, who offered to a woman eager for splendor and novelty the advantages of travelling about the world as the wife of an ambassador who represented Spain at the principal courts.

“The way that girl has amused herself, Juan!” said the manager. “The heads she has turned in ten years from one end of Europe to the other! She must be a regular geography with secret notes at the foot of each page. Surely she cannot look at the map without making a little cross of memory near all the great capitals. And the poor ambassador! He died, of despondency, no doubt, because there was no longer any place to which he could be sent. The good gentleman, accredited to represent our country, would go to a court and inside of a year, behold! the queen or the empress of that land was writing to Spain asking the minister to retire the ambassador and his dreaded consort, whom the newspapers called ‘the irresistible Spanish woman.’ The crowned heads that *gachí* has turned! Queens trembled when they saw her come, as if she were the Asiatic cholera. At last the poor ambassador saw no other place for his talents but the republics of America, but as he was a gentleman of good principles and the friend of kings, he preferred to die. And don’t think that the girl contented herself only with personages who eat and dance in royal

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

palaces. Not if what they say be true! That child is all extremes; it is all or nothing! She will as soon go after one that digs in the ground as the highest above it. I have heard that there in Russia she was running after one of those bushy-haired fellows that throw bombs, a youth with a woman's face, who paid no attention to her because she disturbed him in his business. But the girl kept chasing and chasing after him until finally they hung him. They say, too, that she had an affair with a painter in Paris, and they even say he painted her in the nude, with one arm over her face so as not to be recognized, and that the picture travels around that way on match-boxes. That must be false; an exaggeration! What seems more certain is that she was the great friend of a German, a musician—one of those who write operas. If thou couldst hear her play the piano! And when she sings! Just like one of those singers that come to the theatre of San Fernando in the Easter season. And think not that she sings in Italian only; she talks anything—French, German, English. Her uncle, the Marquis of Moraima, when he talks about her at the Forty-five says he has his suspicions that she speaks Latin. What a woman! Eh, Juanillo? What an interesting creature!

"In Seville," he went on, "she leads an exemplary life. On that account I think what they tell of her foreign affairs may be false; lies of certain young cocks that go for grapes and find them sour."

And laughing at the spirit of this woman, who at times was as bold and as aggressive as a man, he repeated the rumors that had circulated in certain clubs on Sierpes Street. When the "Ambassadress" came to live in Seville, all the young people had formed a court around her.

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

“Imagine, Juanillo, an elegant woman, different from those around here, bringing her clothes and hats from Paris, her perfume from London; besides being a friend of kings, branded with the brand of the finest stock in Europe, so to speak. They followed in her wake like mad men, and the girl permitted them certain liberties, wanting to live among them like a man. But some of them transgressed the bounds, mistaking familiarity for something else, and, at a loss for words, they made too free with their hands. Then there were blows, Juan, and something worse. That young lady is dangerous. It seems that she shoots at a mark, that she knows how to box like an English sailor, and knows besides, that Japanese way of fighting that they call *jitsu*. To sum it all up, if a Christian dares to give her a pinch, she, with her dainty little fists, without even getting angry, will grasp thee and leave thee torn to shreds. Now they attack her less, but she has enemies who go about talking evil of her; some praising what is a lie, others even denying that she is clever.”

Doña Sol, according to the manager, was enthusiastic over life in Seville. After a long sojourn in cold, foggy lands she admired the intensely blue sky and the winter sun of soft gold, and she discoursed on the sweetness of life in this country — *so picturesque!*

“The simplicity of our customs fills her with enthusiasm. She is like one of those English women that come in Holy Week — as if she had not been born in Seville; as if she saw it for the first time! They say she spends her summers in foreign cities and her winters here. She is tired of her life in palaces and courts, and if thou didst but see the people she goes with! She has made them receive her like a sister in the convent of Cristo de Triana

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

and that of the Most Holy Cachorro, and she has spent a pot of money on wine for the brotherhood. Some nights she fills her house with guitarists and dancers, for so many girls in Seville are good singers and dancers. With them go their teachers and their families, even to their most distant relatives; they all stuff themselves with olives, sausages, and wine, and Doña Sol, seated in a big chair like a queen, spends the hours demanding dance after dance, all which must be native to the country. They say this is a diversion equal to that which was given to I don't know what king, who had operas sung for himself alone. Her servants, foreign fellows that have come with her, long-faced and serious as parrots, go about in their evening dress with great trays, passing glasses to the dancers who in plain sight box their ears and snap olive stones in their eyes. Most honest and diverting games! Now, Doña Sol receives Lechuzo in the mornings, an old gypsy who gives guitar lessons, master of the purest style; and when her visitors don't find her with the instrument on her lap, she is with an orange in her hand. The oranges that creature has eaten since she came! And still she isn't satisfied!"

Thus continued Don José, explaining to his *matador* the eccentricities of Doña Sol.

Four days after Gallardo had seen her in the parish church of San Lorenzo, the manager approached the *matador* in a *café* on Sierpes Street with an air of mystery.

"*Gachó*, thou art a child of good fortune. Knowest who has been talking to me about thee?"

And putting his mouth close to the bull-fighter's ear he whispered, "Doña Sol!"

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

She had asked him about his *matador*, and expressed a desire to meet him. She was such an original type! So Spanish!

"She says she has seen thee kill several times, once in Madrid and again, I know not where. She has applauded thee. She recognizes that thou art very brave. What if she should take up with thee! Imagine it! What an honor! Thou wouldst be a brother-in-law, or something like that, of all the high-toned fellows on the European calendar of swells."

Gallardo smiled modestly, lowering his eyes, but at the same time he twisted his handsome person proudly as if he did not consider his manager's hypothesis either difficult or extraordinary.

"But do not form illusions, Juanillo," continued he; "Doña Sol wishes to study a bull-fighter at close range, with the same interest that she takes lessons from the master Lechuzo. Local color and nothing more! 'Bring him day after to-morrow to Tablada,' she told me. Thou knowest what that will be — a baiting of the cattle of the Moraima herd; an entertainment the Marquis has gotten up to divert his niece. We will go; she has invited me also."

Two days later, in the afternoon, the *maestro* and his manager started from the ward of the Feria like gentlemen *picadores*, eagerly watched by the people who peeped out of the doors and stood in groups on the sidewalks.

"They are going to Tablada," they said. "There is to be a bull-baiting."

The manager, mounted on a large-boned mare, was in the dress of the country, short jacket, cloth trousers with yellow gaiters, and leather leggings. The swords-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

man had arrayed himself for the event in his usual bizarre dress of the ancient bull-fighters, before modern fashion had levelled their apparel to that of other mortals. A crush hat of velvet with a plaited band was held on by a chin-strap; the collar of the shirt, innocent of cravat, was fastened with a pair of brilliants and two larger ones sparkled on the undulating bosom; the jacket and waistcoat were of wine-colored velvet with black loops and hangings; lastly there was a red silk belt and tight knee-breeches of dark mixed weave bound at the knees with garters of black braid. His leggings were amber-colored, with leather fringes along the side, and boots of the same color, half hidden in the wide Moorish stirrups, exposed to view great silver spurs. Over the saddle-horn, on top of the gay Jerez blanket whose tassels hung on both sides of the horse, lay a gray jacket with black trimmings and red lining.

The two horsemen rode at a gallop, carrying on their shoulders javelins made of fine elastic wood, with balls on the end to guard the tip. Their passage through the populous ward aroused an ovation. Hurrah! The women waved their hands.

"God be with you, Señores! Amuse yourself, Señor Juan!"

They spurred their horses to escape from the crowd of youngsters that ran after them, and the narrow lanes with their blue pavements and white walls rang with the rhythmic beat of the horseshoes.

On the quiet street of manorial houses with massive grilled gates and great balconies, where Doña Sol lived, they met other riders before the door, sitting on their horses, leaning on their lances. They were young gen-

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

tlemen, relatives or friends of the lady, who greeted the bull-fighter with amiable familiarity, happy to have him in the party. The Marquis of Moraima came out of the house and immediately mounted his horse.

"The child will be down immediately. Everybody knows the women—how long they take to get ready."

He said this with the sententious gravity that he gave to all his words, as if he were uttering oracles. He was a tall, big-boned old man, with long white whiskers in the midst of which his mouth and eyes preserved an infantile ingenuousness. Courteous and measured in his speech, genteel in manner, moderate in his smile, the Marquis of Moraima was a fine gentleman of the type of by-gone days. He was dressed almost always in riding clothes, hating the city life, bored by the social demands of his family when detained by them in Seville, and eager to fly to the country among shepherd-foremen and cattlemen, whom he treated with the familiarity of comrades. He had almost forgotten how to write, from lack of practice, but as soon as the talk turned to cattle, to the raising of bulls and horses, or to agriculture, his eyes shone and he expressed himself with the skill of one deeply learned.

The sunlight clouded. The golden glow on the white walls on one side of the street grew pale. People looked aloft. Along the blue belt between the two rows of eaves, a dark cloud passed.

"There is no danger," said the Marquis gravely. "As I came out of the house I saw a bit of paper which the wind blew in a direction I understand. It will not rain."

All were convinced. It could not rain since the Mar-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

quis of Moraima so declared. He was as weather-wise as an old shepherd; there was no fear of his being mistaken.

Then he faced Gallardo.

"This year I am going to provide for thee some magnificent *corridas*. What bulls! We shall see if thou sendest them to death like good Christians. Thou knowest that this year I have not been quite satisfied. The poor things deserved better."

Doña Sol appeared, holding up her black riding-skirt in one hand and showing beneath it the tops of her high gray leather boots. She wore a man's shirt with a red tie, a jacket and waistcoat of violet velvet, a velvet three-cornered hat gracefully tipped to one side over her curls. She mounted her horse with ease, in spite of the abundant plumpness of her well-developed form, and took her javelin from a servant's hands. She greeted her friends, excusing her tardiness, while her eyes travelled toward Gallardo. The manager spurred his mare closer to make the presentation, but Doña Sol, drawing near, rode up to the bull-fighter.

Gallardo was disturbed at her presence. What a woman! What should he say to her?

He saw that she extended him her hand, a fine hand that was gloriously fragrant, and in his perturbation he could only press it with his great fingers that better knew how to throw wild beasts. But the delicate and rosy palm, instead of cringing under the involuntary and brutal pressure that would have drawn from another a shriek of pain, tightened its muscles with vigorous force, freeing itself easily from his clasp.

"I am most grateful to you for having come, and I am charmed to meet you."

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

And Gallardo, feeling in his confusion the necessity of answering something, stammered, as if he were greeting a devotee:

"Thanks. The family well?"

Doña Sol's discreet laugh was lost in the noise of the horseshoes that resounded on the stones with the first movement of the cavalcade. The lady put her horse to a trot and the whole troop followed, forming an escort around her. Gallardo, abashed, travelled in the rear, not recovering from his stupefaction, and vaguely guessing that he had said something foolish.

They galloped along the outskirts of Seville beside the river; they left behind them the Tower of Gold; they followed shady avenues of yellow sand and then a high-road beside which stood inns and lunch-booths.

As they drew near Tablada they saw, on the green expanse of plain, a dark mass of people and carriages near the palisade that separated the pasture from the enclosure containing the cattle.

The Guadalquivir swept its current through the length of the pasture-grounds. On the opposite bank rose the hill called San Juan de Aznalfarache, crowned by a ruined castle. The country houses loomed white against the silver gray masses of the olive groves. On the opposite wing of the extended horizon, against a blue background on which floated fleecy clouds, was Seville, its houses dominated by the imposing mass of the cathedral and the marvellous Giralda, a tender rose-color in the afternoon light.

The riders advanced with much care through the dense crowd. The curiosity which Doña Sol's eccentricities inspired had attracted nearly all the ladies of Seville.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Her friends bowed to her from their carriages, thinking her most beautiful in her mannish costume. Her relatives, the daughters of the Marquis, some unmarried, others accompanied by their husbands, cautioned her to prudence. "For mercy's sake, Sol! Don't do crazy things!"

The bull-baiters entered the enclosure, welcomed as they passed through the palisade by the applause of the common people who had come to the festivity. The horses, scenting the enemy, and seeing them in the distance, rose on their hind legs and began to prance and neigh, held in by the firm hand of the riders.

The bulls were grouped in the centre of the enclosure. Some were quietly feeding, some were lying on the reddish green winter field. Others, more rebellious, trotted toward the river, and the older bulls, the trained leaders, ran after them, ringing the bells that hung around their necks, while the cow-boys helped them in this rounding up, slinging well-aimed stones that struck the horns of the fugitives. The horsemen remained motionless a long time, as if holding council before the eager gaze of the public awaiting something extraordinary.

The first to start was the Marquis, accompanied by one of his friends. The two riders galloped toward the group of bulls and reined in their horses when near them, standing in their stirrups, waving their javelins in the air, and making loud outcries to frighten them. A black bull with strong legs separated from the band, running toward the end of the enclosure.

The Marquis was justly proud of his herd, which was composed of fine selected animals. They were not oxen destined to the production of meat, with filthy, loose,

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

and wrinkled hide, nor with broad hoofs, nor drooping head, nor with big ill-placed horns. These were animals of nervous vigor, strong and heavy enough to make the earth tremble, raising a cloud of dust beneath their feet; their hide was fine and glossy like that of a thoroughbred horse, their eyes flashed, their neck was thick and proud, and they had short legs, fine delicate tails, slender horns, sharp and clean, as if polished by hand, and round and small hoofs, so hard that they cut the grass as though made of steel.

The two horsemen rode behind the black bull, attacking him on both sides, barring his way when he tried to make for the river, until the Marquis, setting spur to his mare, gained distance and rode up to the bull, with the javelin held before him and, lodging it under his tail, managed, with the combined strength of his arm and horse, to make the beast lose his equilibrium, rolling him on the ground, with his belly up, his horns driven into the earth and his four feet in the air. The rapidity and ease with which the breeder accomplished this trick provoked an explosion of enthusiasm from behind the palisade. Hurrah for the old man! No one understood bulls like the Marquis. He managed them as if they were his own children, following them from the time of their birth in the cow-herd until they went to their death in the plazas like heroes worthy a better fate.

Other horsemen wished to start at once to win the applause of the crowd but Moraima held them back, giving preference to his niece. If she were determined to try her luck it would be better for her to begin now before the herd grew ugly with continued attacks. Doña Sol spurred on her horse which was pawing the ground with

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

his fore feet, excited by the presence of the bulls. The Marquis desired to accompany her in her race, but she objected. No; she would rather have Gallardo, who was a bull-fighter. Where was Gallardo? The *matador*, still ashamed of his stupidity, placed himself at the lady's side without a word. The two set out on a gallop toward the centre of the drove of bulls. Doña Sol's horse reared several times, standing almost upright, as if resisting, but the strong Amazon forced him to advance. Gallardo waved his javelin, uttering shouts that were more like bellows, just as he did in the ring when he incited the beasts to show their mettle.

It took but little urging to make an animal separate from the drove. A white creature with cinnamon-colored spots, an enormous sloping neck, and horns of the finest point, started out. He ran toward the end of the enclosure as if it were his customary haunt, to which he was irresistibly drawn by instinct, and Doña Sol galloped after him, followed by the *matador*.

"Look out, Señora," called Gallardo. "That bull is old and knows the game! Be careful that he does n't turn on you!"

When Doña Sol prepared to achieve the same feat as her uncle, reining her horse alongside to thrust her javelin under the animal's tail and upset him, he turned as if he suspected the danger, planting himself in a threatening attitude before his pursuers. The horse passed in front of the bull, Doña Sol being unable to rein him in on account of his speed, and the beast plunged after him, converting the besieger into the besieged. The lady did not think of flight. Many thousands of people were watching her from a distance. She feared her friends'

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

laughter and the commiseration of the men, so she reined in her horse, making him face the bull. She sat with the javelin under her arm like a *picador*, and she thrust it into the bull's neck as he came on bellowing, his head down. The great cervix reddened with a stream of blood, but the beast continued to advance from mere momentum, not feeling that he enlarged the wound, till he thrust his horns beneath the horse, shaking him and lifting his fore feet off the ground. The Amazon was thrown from her saddle while a shout of horror from hundreds of throats arose in the distance. The horse, freeing himself from the horns, began to run like mad, his belly stained with blood, the girths broken, the saddle hanging over his back. The bull started to follow him, when at that instant something nearer attracted his attention. It was Doña Sol, who, instead of lying motionless on the ground, had just arisen, and picking up her javelin, placed it bravely under her arm to hold off the bull again. It was mad arrogance, due to her consciousness of the many who watched her. It was a challenge to death rather than yield to cowardice and ridicule.

They no longer shouted behind the palisade. The crowd was motionless with the silence of terror. The whole troop of bull-baiters rode up on a mad gallop in a cloud of dust, the riders seeming to gain in size at every bound. Aid would come too late. The bull pawed the ground with his fore feet and lowered his head to attack the audacious little figure that stood threatening him with the lance. One little horn-stab would make an end of it! But at the same instant, a fierce bellowing distracted the bull's attention and something red passed before his vision like a flame of fire. It was Gallardo,

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

who had thrown himself off his mare, abandoning the javelin to grasp the jacket which he carried on the pommel of his saddle.

“Aaaa! Come on!”

The bull came on, running past the red-lined jacket, attracted by an adversary worthy of him, and turned his hind quarters toward the figure in the black skirt and violet bodice, that, in the stupefaction of danger, still stood with the lance under her arm.

“Have no fear, Doña Sol; he is mine now!” cried the bull-fighter, still pale with emotion but smiling, sure of his skill. Without other defence than the jacket, he fought the beast, drawing him away from the lady and escaping from its furious attacks with graceful movements.

The crowd, forgetting the recent fright, commenced to applaud, enraptured. What joy! To go to a simple baiting and to find themselves at an almost formal *corrida*, seeing Gallardo work gratis.

The bull-fighter, fired by the violence with which the brute attacked him, forgot Doña Sol and every one else, intent only on evading his attacks. The bull became furious, seeing that the man slipped unharmed from between his horns, and fell upon him again, never encountering anything but the brilliant red lining of the jacket.

At last he wearied and stood still, his mouth frothing, his head low, his legs trembling; then Gallardo took advantage of the brute's stupefaction and taking off his hat touched his head with it. An immense shout arose behind the palisade, greeting this heroic exploit. Then yells and ringing of bells sounded at Gallardo's back,

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

cattlemen with lead-bulls appeared and, surrounding the animal, drove it slowly toward the thick of the herd.

Gallardo went in search of his mare, which stood motionless, accustomed to being near the bulls. He picked up his javelin, mounted, and rode back toward the palisade at a gentle gallop, prolonging the noisy applause of the crowd by this slow riding. The horsemen who had taken Doña Sol away greeted him with wild enthusiasm. The manager winked one eye at him, saying mysteriously, "*Gachó*, thou hast not been slow. Very good, but very good! Now I tell thee that thou'lt get her."

Doña Sol was in the landau of the Marquis' daughters, outside the palisade. Her cousins surrounded her, anxious, feeling her over, almost expecting to find some bone broken by her fall. They gave her glasses of *manzanilla* to help her recover from her fright but she smiled with an air of superiority, passively receiving these feminine demonstrations.

As she saw Gallardo breaking through the lines of people on his horse, amidst waving hats and extended hands, the lady smiled yet more brightly.

"Come here, Cid Campeador. Give me your hand!"

And again their hands clasped, with a pressure that lasted long.

In the evening, in the house of the *matador*, this event, which was talked about throughout the whole city, was commented upon. Señora Angustias displayed satisfaction, just as after a *corrida*. Her son saving one of those *señoras* on whom she gazed with admiration, habituated to reverence by long years of servitude! Carmen remained silent, scarcely knowing what to think.

Several days passed without Gallardo's receiving news

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

from Doña Sol. The manager was out of the city hunting with some friends of the Forty-five. One afternoon, near nightfall, Don José sought him in a *café* on Sierpes Street where the connoisseurs met. He had returned from the hunt two hours before and had had to go immediately to Doña Sol's house in response to a certain note that awaited him at his domicile.

"But, man alive, thou art worse than a wolf!" said the manager, drawing his *matador* out of the *café*. "This lady expected thee to go to her house. She has spent most of her afternoons at home, thinking thou wouldst come any moment. This should n't be. After my having introduced thee, and after all that happened, thou owest her a call; a question of asking for her health."

The *matador* stopped in his walk and scratched his head beneath his hat.

"Well, but," he murmured with indecision, "well, but I am embarrassed. Yes, that is it; yes, sir, embarrassed. You know that I have my affairs with women and that I know how to say a half dozen words to any common *gachí*; but to this one, no. This is a lady, and when I see her I realize that I am rough and coarse, and I keep my mouth shut, for I can't speak without putting my foot in it. No, Don José, I am not going. I ought not to go."

But the manager, sure of convincing him, conducted him toward Doña Sol's house, talking of his recent interview with the lady. She showed herself somewhat offended by Gallardo's forgetfulness. The best in Seville had gone to see her since her accident at Tablada, but not he.

"Thou knowest that a bull-fighter should stand well

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

with the people who are worth while. One must have education and show that he is not a herder raised in the branding-pen. A lady of so much importance who honors thee and expects thee! Come! I will go with thee."

"Ah! If you accompany me!" And Gallardo drew a deep breath on hearing this, as if he were freed from the weight of a great danger.

They entered Doña Sol's house. The courtyard was in Moorish style, its many colored arcades of beautiful designs recalling the horseshoe arches of the Alhambra. The fountain flowing into a basin where gold-fish were swimming sang with sweet monotony in the afternoon stillness. In the four surrounding passages with carved ceilings separated from the courtyard by the marble columns of the arcades, the bull-fighter saw ancient mosaics, time-darkened paintings, images of saints with livid countenances, and wood-work worm-eaten as though it had been fusilladed with small shot.

A servant conducted them up the broad marble stairway, and there again the bull-fighter was surprised to see paintings on wood of rude figures with a gilded background; voluptuous virgins that seemed to be hewn out with an axe, with delicate colors and faded gold, looted from ancient altars; tapestries of the soft tone of dry leaves, bordered with flowers and fruits, some representing scenes from Calvary, others full of hairy satyrs with hoofs and horns with whom nude girls seemed to play as men play with bulls in the ring.

"How vast is ignorance," he said to his manager. "And I had thought that all this was only good for convents. How much these people seem to value it."

Gallardo received new surprises. He was proud of

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

his own furniture brought from Madrid, all of gaudy silk and complicated design, heavy and rich, seeming to proclaim, as it were by shouts, the money it had cost, but here he was dazzled at the sight of delicate and fragile chairs, white or green, tables and cupboards of simple lines, walls of a single tint with no other ornament than small paintings separated by great distances, and hanging by heavy cords, the whole giving a tone of subdued and quiet elegance that seemed the handiwork of artists. He was ashamed of his own stupefaction and of what he had admired in his house as the supreme of luxury. "How vast is ignorance!" And as he seated himself he did so with care, fearing lest the chair would crumble beneath his weight.

Doña Sol's presence banished these thoughts. He saw her, as he had never before seen her, without *mantilla* or hat, her glossy hair hanging, and seeming to justify her romantic name. Her arms, of superlative whiteness, escaped from the silken funnels of a Japanese tunic crossed over the breast, which left uncovered a space of adorable neck, slightly amber-colored, with the lines that suggest the neck of the mother Venus. Stones of all colors set in rings of strange design covered her fingers and scintillated with magic splendor as she moved her hands. On her youthful wrists glistened bracelets of gold, some of Oriental filigree with mysterious inscriptions, others massive, from which hung amulets and little foreign figures, mementoes of distant travels. She had crossed one leg over the other with manlike freedom, and on the point of one of her feet dangled a red slipper with a high, gilded heel, tiny as a toy, and covered with heavy embroidery.

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

Gallardo's ears buzzed, his vision was clouded, he only managed to distinguish a pair of blue eyes fixed on him with an expression half caressing, half ironic. To hide his emotion, he smiled, showing his teeth,—the expressionless smile of a child who wishes to be amiable.

"No, Señora — many thanks. That amounted to nothing."

Thus he received Doña Sol's expressions of gratitude for his heroic feat of the other afternoon. Little by little Gallardo began to acquire a certain composure. The lady and the manager talked of bulls, and this gave the swordsman a sudden confidence. She had seen him kill several times, and she remembered exactly the principal incidents. Gallardo felt pride that this woman had gazed upon him at such moments and had even kept fresh the memory of his deeds. She opened a lacquer box, decorated with weird flowers, and offered the men cigarettes with golden mouthpieces which exhaled a strange and pungent perfume.

"They contain opium; they are very agreeable."

And she lighted one, following the smoke spirals with her greenish eyes which acquired a tremor of liquid gold as they refracted the light. The bull-fighter, accustomed to the strong Havana tobacco, smoked the cigarette with curiosity. Pure straw; a mere treat for ladies. But the strange perfume of the smoke slowly overcame his timidity.

Doña Sol, looking at him fixedly, asked questions about his life. She wished to get a glimpse behind the scenes of glory, of the subterranean ways of celebrity, of the miserable wandering life of the bull-fighter before he gained public acclamation; and Gallardo, with sudden

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

confidence, talked and talked, telling of his youthful days, dwelling with proud delectation on the lowliness of his origin, although omitting all that he considered questionable in his eventful adolescence.

"Very interesting, very original!" said the handsome lady, and withdrawing her eyes from the bull-fighter they became lost in wandering contemplation, as if fixed on something invisible.

"The greatest man in the world!" exclaimed Don José in frank enthusiasm. "Believe me, Sol; there are no two youths like this. And the way he recuperates from horn-stabs —!"

Happy in Gallardo's fortitude, as if he were his progenitor, he enumerated the wounds he had received, describing them as if they could be seen through his clothing. The lady's eyes followed him in this anatomical journey with sincere admiration. A true hero; timid, shy, and simple, like all strong men. The manager spoke of taking his leave. It was after seven and he was expected at home. But Doña Sol rose to her feet with smiling determination as if to oppose his going. He must remain; they must dine with her; a friendly invitation. That night she expected no one else. The Marquis and his family had gone to the country.

"I am alone — not another word. I command. You will stay and take pot-luck with me."

And as if her orders admitted of no question, she left the room.

The manager protested. No, he could not remain; he had come from outside the city that very afternoon, and his family had scarcely seen him. Besides, he had invited two friends. As for his *matador*, it seemed to him

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

natural and proper that he should stay. Really, the invitation was meant for him.

"But stay a while at least!" said the swordsman, distressed. "Damn it! Don't leave me alone. I shall not know what to do; I shall not know what to say."

A quarter of an hour afterward Doña Sol appeared again, dressed in one of her Paris gowns, a Paquin model, the desperation and wonder of relatives and friends.

Don José insisted again. He must go, but his *matador* should stay. He would take care to let them know at home so that they would not wait for him. Again Gallardo made a gesture of agony, but he grew calm at a look from the manager.

"Don't worry," he whispered, going toward the door, "dost thou think I am a child? I will say thou art dining with some connoisseurs from Madrid."

What torment Gallardo suffered during the first moments of the dinner! He was intimidated by the grave and lordly luxury of the dining-room in which he and the lady seemed to be lost, seated face to face at the centre of a great table, under enormous silver candelabras with electric lights and rose-colored shades. The imposing servants inspired awe; they were ceremonious and impassive as if habituated to the most extraordinary actions; as if nothing this lady did could surprise them. He was ashamed of his dress and manners, feeling the strong contrast between the environment and his appearance. But this first impression of fear and shyness vanished little by little. Doña Sol laughed at his moderation, at the fear with which he touched the plates and cups. Gallardo ended by admiring her. What an appetite the blonde woman had! Accustomed to the

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

squeamishness and abstinence of the *señoritas* he had known, who thought it bad taste to eat much, he marvelled at Doña Sol's voracity and at the naturalness with which she disposed of the viands. Mouthfuls disappeared between her rosy lips without leaving the slightest trace of their passage; her jaws worked without in the least diminishing the beautiful serenity of her countenance; she carried the glass to her mouth without the slightest drop of liquor spilling a colored pearl upon her clothing. Surely thus must goddesses eat!

Gallardo, fired by her example, ate, and above all, drank much, seeking in the varied and heavy wines a remedy for that stupidity that made him silent as if abashed in the lady's presence, and unable to do more than to smile and repeat, "Many thanks."

The conversation grew animated; the *matador* became loquacious and talked of funny incidents in the tauro-machic life, ending by telling about Nacional's original propaganda, and the feats of his *picador* Potaje, a wild fellow who swallowed hard-boiled eggs whole; how he was minus half an ear on account of one of his *compadres* having bitten it off, and how, on being carried injured into the infirmaries of the ring, he would fall on the bed with such a weight of armor and muscle that he would cut through the mattresses with his enormous spurs, and then had to be unriveted.

"Very original! Very interesting!"

Doña Sol listened, smiling at the details of the existence of these rough men, ever close to death, whom she had until then admired only at a distance.

The champagne completed the work of upsetting Gal-

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

lardo, and when he rose from the table he gave his arm to the lady, surprised at his own audacity. Did not they do so in the great world? He was not so ignorant as he seemed at first sight!

In the drawing-room where coffee was served he saw a guitar. Doña Sol offered it to him, asking him to play.

"But I don't know how! I am the most unskilled fellow in the world, aside from killing bulls!"

He regretted that the *puntillero* of his *cuadrilla* was not there, a boy who set the women crazy with his "hands of gold" for plucking the strings of a guitar.

Gallardo was leaning back on a sofa smoking the magnificent Havana a servant had offered him. Doña Sol was smoking one of the cigarettes whose perfume created such a vague drowsiness. The heaviness of digestion weighed upon the bull-fighter, closing his mouth and permitting him no other sign of life than a fixed smile of stupidity. The lady, wearied, doubtless, at the silence in which her words were lost, seated herself before a grand piano, and striking the keys with virile force, drew forth the gay rhythm of *Malagueñas* followed by *Sevillanas*, and then all the old Andalusian songs, melancholy and of Oriental dreaminess, which Doña Sol had stored in her memory as an enthusiastic admirer of *la tierra*.

Gallardo interrupted the music with his exclamations, just as he did when seated near the stage of a music-hall.

"Good for those little hands of gold! Let's hear another."

"Do you enjoy music?" asked the lady.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

"Oh, very much!" Gallardo had never been asked this question until now, but undoubtedly he enjoyed it.

Doña Sol passed slowly from the lively rhythm of the popular songs to other music more slow, more solemn, which the *matador*, in his philharmonic wisdom, recognized as "church music." He no longer shouted exclamations of enthusiasm. He was overcome by a delicious quiet, trying to keep awake by contemplating the handsome lady whose back was turned toward him. What a figure — Mother of God! His Moorish eyes fastened themselves on the nape of her neck, round and white, crowned by an aureole of wild, rebellious, golden hair. An absurd idea danced through his blunted mind, keeping him awake with the tickling of temptation.

"What would that *gachí* do if I should rise and creep up behind her step by step and give her a kiss on that rich little neck of hers?"

But his design did not venture beyond a tempting thought. That woman inspired an irresistible respect. Moreover, he remembered his manager's talk of the arrogance with which she could frighten away troublesome bores; of that little game learned in foreign lands which taught her how to manage a strong man as if he were a rag. He continued gazing at the white neck, like a moon surrounded by a nimbus of gold seen through the clouds which drowsiness hung before his eyes. He was going to fall asleep! He feared that suddenly a loud snore would interrupt the music, a music incomprehensible to him, and which, consequently, must be magnificent. He pinched his legs to keep awake; stretched out his arms; covered his mouth with one hand to stifle his yawns.

THE VOICE OF THE SIREN

A long time passed. Gallardo was not sure whether he had slept or not. Suddenly Doña Sol's voice woke him from this painful somnolence. She had laid down her cigarette with its blue spirals of smoke, and in a low voice that accentuated the words, giving them impassioned trembling, she sang, accompanying herself by the melody of the piano.

The bull-fighter cocked his ears to try to understand something. Not a word. They were foreign songs. "Damn it! Why not a *tango* or a *soleá*? And yet a Christian is expected to keep awake."

Doña Sol ran her fingers over the keys, casting her eyes upward, throwing her head back, her firm breast trembling with musical sighs. It was Elsa's prayer, the lament of the blonde virgin thinking of the strong man, the brave warrior, invincible before men, and sweet and timid with women. She dreamed awake in her song, throwing into her words tremors of passion, the moisture rising to her eyes. The simple strong man! The warrior! Maybe he was behind her! Why not?

He did not have the legendary aspect of the other; he was rough and unpolished, but she could yet see, with the clarity of a vivid recollection, the grace with which days before he had rushed to her rescue; the smiling confidence with which he had fought a bellowing, infuriated beast, just as the Wagnerian heroes fought frightful dragons. Yes; he was *her* warrior. And shaken from her heels to the roots of her hair by a voluptuous fear, giving herself up for conquered in advance, she thought she could divine the sweet danger that was approaching behind her. She saw the hero, the knight, rise slowly from the sofa, his Moorish eyes fixed upon her; she heard his

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

cautious steps; she felt his hands on her shoulders; then a kiss of fire on her neck, a brand of passion that marked her his slave for all time— But suddenly the romance ended, and nothing had happened; she had experienced no other impression than her own thrills of timid desire.

Disappointed, she turned around on the piano stool; the music ceased. The warrior was there, buried in the sofa, with a match in his hand, trying to light his cigar for the fourth time, and opening his eyes immeasurably wide to drive the torpor from his senses.

Seeing her eyes fastened upon him, Gallardo rose to his feet. Ah, the supreme moment was coming! The hero strode toward her, to press her with manly passion, to conquer her, to make her his.

“Good-night, Doña Sol. I must go, it is late. You will want to rest.”

Impelled by surprise and dismay, she extended her hand, not knowing what she did. Strong and simple like a hero!

All the feminine conventionalisms went rushing in confusion through her mind, the traditional expressions a woman never forgets, not even in the moments of her greatest abandon. Her desire was impossible. The first time he entered her house? Without the slightest pretence of resistance? Could she go to him? But when the swordsman clasped her hand she looked into his eyes, eyes that could only gaze with impassioned steadiness, that in their mute tenacity expressed his timid hopes, his silent desires.

“Don’t go—come; come!”

And she said no more.

CHAPTER VII

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

A GREAT satisfaction was added to the numerous conceits which served to flatter Gallardo's vanity. When he talked with the Marquis of Moraima, he contemplated him now with an almost filial affection. That *señor* dressed like a country gentleman, a rude centaur in chaps, with a strong lance, was an illustrious personage who could cover his breast with official sashes and wear in the palace of kings a coat covered with embroidery, with a golden key sewed to one lapel. His most remote ancestors had come to Seville with the monarch that expelled the Moors, receiving as a reward for their deeds immense territories taken from the enemy, of which the great plains where the Marquis' bulls now pastured were the remains. His nearest forefathers had been friends and councillors of monarchs, spending a large part of their patrimony in the pageantry of court life. And this great lord, kind and frank, who maintained in the simplicity of his country life the distinction of his illustrious ancestry, was almost like a near relative of Gallardo. The cobbler's son was as haughty as if he had become a member and formed a part of a noble family. The Marquis of Moraima was his uncle, although he could not confess it publicly and, though the relationship was not legitimate, he consoled himself thinking of the dominion he exercised over a woman of

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

that family, thanks to a love that seemed to laugh at all law and class prejudice. His cousins also, and relatives in greater or less degree of proximity, were all those young gentlemen who used to receive him with that somewhat disdainful familiarity which connoisseurs of rank bestow upon bull-fighters; these now began to treat him as equals. Accustomed to hear Doña Sol speak of them with the familiarity of kinship, Gallardo thought it disadvantageous to him not to treat them with equal freedom.

His life and habits had changed. He seldom entered the *cafés* on Sierpes Street where his old admirers gathered. They were good fellows, simple and earnest, but of little importance; small merchants, workmen who had risen to be employers; modest employees; vagabonds of no profession who lived miraculously by unknown expedients, with no other visible occupation than talking of bulls.

Gallardo passed the windows of the *cafés* and bowed to these devotees, who responded with eager signs for him to come in. "I'll return soon." But he did not. He entered an aristocratic club on the same street, with servants in knee breeches, with imposing Gothic decorations and silver service on its tables. The son of Señora Angustias felt a glow of vanity whenever he passed among the servants standing so erect, with a military air, in their black coats, and a lackey, imposing as a magistrate, with a silver chain around his neck, offered to take his hat and stick. It pleased him to mix with so many distinguished people. The young men, sunk down in high chairs like those seen in romantic dramas, talked of horses and women, and kept account of all the duels that took place

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

in Spain, for they were men of fastidious honor and unquestioned valor. In an inside room they shot at targets; in another they gambled from the early evening hours until after sunrise. They tolerated Gallardo as an "original" of the club, because he was a reputable bull-fighter, who dressed well, spent money, and had good connections.

"He is very celebrated," said the members, with great tact, realizing that he knew as much as they did.

The character of Don José, who was charming and well-born, served the bull-fighter as a guarantee in this new existence. Moreover, Gallardo, with his cleverness as an old-time street gamin, knew how to make himself popular with this assemblage of gay youths in which he met acquaintances by the dozens.

He gambled much. It was the best means of coming into contact with his "new family" and strengthening the relationship. He gambled and lost with the bad luck of a man fortunate in other undertakings. He spent his nights in the "hall of crime," as the gambling room was called, and he seldom managed to gain. His ill-luck was a cause of pride to the club.

"Last night Gallardo took a good laying out," said the members. "He lost at least eleven thousand *pesetas*."

And this prestige as a strong "bank," as well as the serenity with which he gave up his money, made his new friends respect him, finding in him a firm upholder of society's game. The new passion rapidly took possession of him. The excitement of the game dominated him even to the point of sometimes making him forget the great lady who was to him the most interesting object in the world. To gamble with the best in Seville! To be

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

treated as an equal by the young gentlemen, with the fraternal feeling that the loaning of money and common emotions creates!

Suddenly one night a great cluster of electric globes that stood on the green table and illuminated the room went out. There was darkness and disorder, but Gallardo's imperious voice rose above the confusion.

"Silence, gentlemen! Nothing has happened. On with the game! Let them bring candles!"

And the game went on, his companions admiring him for his energetic oratory even more than for the bulls he killed. The manager's friends asked him about Gallardo's losses. He would be ruined; what he earned by the bulls was being eaten up by gaming. But Don José smiled disdainfully, doubling the glory of his *matador*.

"We have more bull-fights for this year than any one else. We're going to get tired of killing bulls and earning money. Let the boy amuse himself. That's what he works for, and that's why he is what he is — the greatest man in the world!"

Don José considered that the people's admiration for the serenity with which he lost added glory to his idol. A *matador* could not be like other men who keep chasing after a cent. He did not earn his money for nothing. Besides, it pleased him as a personal triumph, as something that was an accomplishment of his own, to see him established in a social set which not everybody could join.

"He is the man of the day," he said with an aggressive air to those who criticised Gallardo's new habits. "He does n't go with nobodies, nor does he sit around taverns like other bull-fighters. And what does that prove? He

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

is the bull-fighter of the aristocracy, because he wants to be, and can be. The others are jealous."

In his new existence, Gallardo not only frequented the club, but some afternoons he mingled with the Society of the Forty-five. It was a kind of senate of tauromachy. Bull-fighters did not find easy access to its *salons*, thus leaving the respectable nobility of the connoisseurs free to voice their opinions.

During the spring and summer the Forty-five gathered in the vestibule and on the sidewalk, seated in willow armchairs, to await the telegrams from the bull-fights. They had little faith in the opinions of the press; moreover they must get the news before it came out in the papers. Telegrams from all parts of the Peninsula where bull-fights were held came at nightfall, and the members, after listening with religious gravity to their reading, argued and built suppositions upon these telegraphic brevities. It was a function that filled them with pride, elevating them above common mortals, this of remaining quietly seated at the door of the Society, enjoying the cool air and hearing in a certain manner, without prejudiced exaggerations, what had occurred that afternoon in the bull plaza of Bilbao, or of Coruña or Barcelona, or Valencia, of the ears one *matador* had received or the hisses that had greeted another, while their fellow-citizens remained in the saddest depths of ignorance and walked the streets obliged to wait till night for the coming out of the newspapers. When there was an accident, and a telegram arrived announcing the terrible goring of a native bull-fighter, emotion and patriotic sentiment softened the respectable senators to the point of communicating the important secret to some passing friend.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

The news instantly circulated through the *cafés* on Sierpes Street, and no one doubted it at all. It was a telegram received at the Forty-five.

Gallardo's manager, with his aggressive and noisy enthusiasm, disturbed the social gravity; but they tolerated him on account of his being an old friend and they ended by laughing at his ways. It was impossible for such critical persons to discuss the merits of the bull-fighters tranquilly with Don José. Often, on speaking of Gallardo as "a brave boy, but with little art," they looked timorously toward the door.

"Pepe is coming," they said, and the conversation was suddenly broken off.

Don José entered waving the blue paper of a telegram above his head.

"Have you got news from Santander? Here it is: Gallardo, two strokes, two bulls, and with the second, the ear. Now, didn't I tell you? The greatest man in the world!"

The telegram for the Forty-five was often different, but the manager scarcely conceded it a scornful glance, bursting out in noisy protest.

"Lies! All jealousy! My message is the one that's worth something. That one shows pique because my boy gets all the favors."

And the members in the end laughed at Don José, touching their foreheads with a finger to indicate his madness, joking about "the greatest man in the world" and his funny manager.

Little by little, as an unheard of privilege, he managed to introduce Gallardo into the Society. The bull-fighter came under the pretext of looking for his manager and

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

finally seated himself among the gentlemen, many of whom were not his friends and had chosen *their matador* among the rival swordsmen.

The decorations of this club-house had distinction, as Don José said; high wainscotings of Moorish tiles, and on the immaculately white walls, gay posters recalling past bull-fights; mounted heads of bulls famous for the number of horses they had killed or for having wounded some celebrated *matador*; glittering capes and swords presented by certain bull-fighters on "cutting the queue" and retiring from the profession.

Servants in frock coats waited on gentlemen in country dress or in negligee during the hot summer afternoons. In Holy Week and during other great feasts of Seville, when illustrious connoisseurs from all over Spain called to greet the Forty-five, the servants dressed in knee breeches and wore white wigs with red and yellow livery. In this guise, like lackeys of a royal house, they served trays of *manzanilla* to the wealthy gentlemen, some of whom had even taken off their cravats.

In the afternoons, when the dean of the Club, the illustrious Marquis of Moraima, presented himself, the members formed in a circle in deep armchairs and the famous cattle-breeder occupied a seat higher than the others like a throne, from which he presided over the conversation. They always began by talking about the weather. They were mostly breeders and rich farmers who lived on the products of the earth when favored by the variable heavens. The Marquis expounded the observations drawn from the knowledge acquired on interminable horse-back rides over the Andalusian plain. Upon this immense desert, with a boundless horizon like a sea of land,

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

the bulls resembled drowsy sharks moving slowly among the waves of herbage. The drought, that cruel calamity of the Andalusian plains, led to discussions lasting whole afternoons, and when, after long weeks of expectation, the lowering sky let fall a few drops, big and hot, the great country gentlemen smiled joyfully, rubbing their hands, and the Marquis said impressively, looking at the broad circles that wet the pavement:

“The glory of God! Every drop of these is a five dollar gold piece!”

When they were not busying themselves talking about the weather, cattle became the subject of their conversation, and especially bulls, as though they were united to them by a blood relationship. The breeders listened with respect to the Marquis' opinions, recognizing the prestige of his superior fortune. The mere amateurs, who never went out of the city, admired his skill as a raiser of noble animals. What that man knew! He showed himself convinced of the greatness of his occupation when he talked of the care the bulls needed. Out of every ten calves eight or nine were only good for meat, after being tested for their temper. Only one or two which proved themselves ferocious and aggressive before the point of the spear came to be considered animals suitable for combat, living apart, with all manner of care — and such care!

“A herd of fierce bulls,” said the Marquis, “should not be treated as a business. It is a luxury. They give, for a fighting bull, four or five times more than for an ox for the butcher-shop — but what they cost!”

They must be cared for at all hours, heed must be taken in regard to their pasture and water, they must

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

be moved from one place to another with changes of temperature. Each bull costs more to maintain than a family. And when he is ready he must be watched till the last minute so that he may not disgrace himself in the ring but do honor to the emblem of the breeder which he wears on his neck.

The Marquis had been compelled to quarrel with the managers and authorities of certain plazas, and had refused to furnish his animals because the band of music was placed over the bull-pens. The noise of the instruments upset the animals, taking away their courage and serenity when they entered the arena.

"They are just like ourselves," he said with tenderness. "They lack only speech. What do I say? Like us? There are some that are better than some people."

And he told about Lobito, an old bull, a leader, which he declared he would not sell even if they would give him the whole of Seville with its Giralda. He no sooner galloped in sight of the drove in which this jewel lived on the vast pastures, than a shout was enough to call his attention. "Lobito!" And Lobito, abandoning his companions, came to meet the Marquis, moistening the horseman's boots with his gentle muzzle; yet he was an animal of immense power and the rest of the herd lived in fear of him.

The breeder dismounted, and taking a piece of chocolate out of his saddle bags, he gave it to Lobito, who gratefully bowed his head armed with its gigantic horns. The Marquis advanced with an arm resting over the leader's neck, walking quietly through the drove of bulls, which grew restless and ferocious at the presence of the man. There was no danger. Lobito marched like a dog,

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

covering the master with his body, looking in all directions, compelling respect among his companions with his flashing eyes. If one more audacious drew near to nose the Marquis he encountered the threatening horns of the leader. If several united with dull stupidity to bar his passage, Lobito thrust his armed head among them and opened the way.

An expression of enthusiasm and tenderness moved the Marquis' beardless lips and his white side-whiskers as he recalled the great deeds of some of the animals produced in his pastures.

"The bull! The noblest animal in the world! If men were more like them the world would be better off. There was Coronel. Do you remember that treasure?"

And he showed an immense photograph with a handsome mounting, that represented himself in mountaineer dress, much younger and surrounded by several girls dressed in white, all seated in the centre of a meadow on a dark mass at one end of which was a pair of horns. This mass was Coronel. Immense and fierce toward his companions in the herd, he showed affectionate submission to the master and his family. He was like a mastiff, fierce to strangers, but letting the children pull him about by the tail and ears and put up with all their deviltry with growls of kindness. The Marquis had with him his young daughters, and the animal smelt of the little girls' white skirts as they timidly clung to their father's legs, until, with the sudden audacity of childhood, they ended by rubbing his nose. "Down, Coronel!" Coronel went down on his knees and the family seated themselves on his side, which moved up and down like a bellows with the *ru-ru* of his powerful respiration.

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

One day, after much hesitation, the Marquis sold him to the plaza of Pamplona and attended the bull-fight. Moraima was moved by the recollection of this event; his eyes filled with emotion. He had never in all his life seen a bull like that. He came courageously into the arena and stood planted in the middle of it, surprised at the light after the darkness of the bull-pen, and at the clamor of thousands of persons after the silence of the stables. But the moment a *picador* pricked him he seemed to fill the whole plaza with his tremendous fierceness.

“Before him, men, horses, nothing could stand. In one minute he threw the horses and tossed the *picadores* into the air. The *peones* ran. The plaza was like a regular branding-pen. The public shouted for more horses, and Coronel, in the meantime, stood waiting for some one to stand up and face him. Nothing like that for nobility and power will ever be seen again.

As soon as they incited him to come on, he rushed up with a courage and speed that set the public wild. When they gave the sign to kill, with the fourteen stabs he had in his body, and the complete set of *banderillas*, he was as brave and valiant as though he had never gone out of the pasture. Then —”

The breeder, when he arrived at this point, always stopped, to strengthen his voice, which grew tremulous.

Then—the Marquis of Moraima, who had been in a box, found himself, he knew not how, behind the barrier among attendants who were running about with the excitement of the eventful contest, and near to the *matador*, who was making ready his *muleta* with a certain deliberation, as if wishing to put off the moment for standing face to face with an animal of such power. “Coronel!”

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

shouted the Marquis, leaning his body half over the barrier and beating the boards with his hands.

The animal stood still but raised his head at these cries — distant calls from a country he would never see again. "Coronel!" Turning his head the bull saw a man calling to him from the wall and he started in a direct line to attack him. But in the midst of his advance he slackened his pace and slowly approached until he touched with his horns the arms held out to him. His throat was varnished red with little streams of blood which escaped from the barbs buried in his neck and from the wounds in his hide, in which the blue muscle could be seen. "Coronel! My son!" And the bull, as if he understood these outbursts of tenderness, raised his dripping muzzle and dampened the Marquis' white beard. "Why hast thou brought me here?" those wild and bloodshot eyes seemed to say. And the Marquis, unheeding what he did, pressed kisses upon the animal's nose that was wet with his furious bellowings.

"Don't let him be killed!" shouted a good soul in the galleries; and as if these words reflected the mind of the public, an explosion of voices filled the plaza, while thousands of handkerchiefs fluttered above the tiers of seats like flocks of doves. "Don't let him be killed!" For a moment the multitude, moved by a vague tenderness, despised its own diversion, hated the bull-fighter with his glittering dress and his useless heroism, admired the valor of the animal, and felt inferior to it, recognizing that among so many thousands of reasoning beings the greater nobility and sensibility were represented by the poor brute.

"I took him back," said the Marquis, with emotion.

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

"I returned the management their two thousand *peselas*. I would have given my whole hacienda. After he had been pastured in the meadow a month he did n't even have the scars on his neck. It was my intention to let that brave beast die of old age, but the good do not prosper in this world. A tricky bull that was not fit to look him in the face treacherously gored him to death."

The Marquis and his fellow cattle-breeders passed suddenly from this tenderness toward the animals, to the pride they felt in their ferocity. One should see the scorn with which they talked of the enemies of bull-fights, of those who protested against this art in the name of prevention of cruelty to animals. Foreigners' nonsense! Errors of ignoramuses, who only distinguish animals by their horns and think a slaughter-house ox the same as a fighting-bull! The Spanish bull was a wild-beast; the most heroic wild beast in the world. And they recounted the numerous combats between bulls and terrible felines, always followed by the noisy triumph of the national wild beast.

The Marquis laughed as he recollected another of his animals. A combat was arranged in a plaza between a bull, and a lion, and a tiger belonging to a certain famous tamer, and the breeder sent Barrabas, a wicked animal he had always kept by himself in the pasture because he was ever goring his companions, and had killed many cattle.

"I saw that, also," said Moraima. "A great iron cage in the centre of the ring, and in it was Barrabas. First they let the lion loose at him and the damned beast, taking advantage of the bull's lack of cunning, jumped onto his hind quarters and began to tear him with his claws

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

and teeth. Barrabas jumped with fury to unfasten him and get him in front of his horns where his defences lay. At last, in one of his turns, he managed to toss the lion in front of him and gored him, and then, gentlemen, just like a ball, he smelled him from tip to tip a long while, shook him about like a figure stuffed with straw, till finally, as if he despised him, he tossed him to one side and there lay what they call the 'king of beasts' rolled up into a heap, mewing like a cat that has had a beating. Then they let the tiger at him and the affair was shorter yet. He had scarcely stuck his nose in before Barrabas hooked him and tossed him up, and after getting a good shaking, he went into the corner like the other, curling himself up and playing baby."

These recollections always provoked great laughter at the Forty-five. The Spanish bull! Little wild beasts to face him! And in their joyful exclamations there was an expression of national pride, as if the arrogant courage of the Spanish wild beast signified equally the superiority of the land and race over the rest of the world.

At the time Gallardo began to frequent the Society, a new subject of conversation interrupted the endless discussions about bulls and the country's crops.

At the Forty-five, as well as all over Seville, they talked about "Plumitas," a bandit celebrated for his audacity, who each day acquired fresh fame by the fruitless efforts of his pursuers. The newspapers related his deeds as if he were a national personage; the Government was interpellated in the Cortes and promised an immediate capture which never took place; the civil guard concentrated and a regular army was mobilized for pursuing him while Plumitas, always alone, with no other

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

auxiliary than his carbine and his restless steed, slipped in and out among them like a phantom. When their numbers were not great he faced them and dropped some one of them lifeless, and he was revered and assisted by the poor country people, miserable slaves on enormous estates, who saw in the bandit an avenger of the hungry, a quick and cruel justice, like that exercised by the ancient mail-clad knight errant. Plumitas demanded money from the rich and, with the air of an actor who sees himself watched by an immense audience, from time to time he succored some poor old woman or a laborer burdened with a family. These acts of generosity were enlarged upon by the gossips of the rural multitude, who at all hours had the name of Plumitas on their lips but who were blind and dumb when questioned by the military or the police.

He passed from one province to another with the ease of one who knew the country well, and the land-owners of Seville and Córdoba contributed equally to his sustenance. Whole weeks would pass without talk of the bandit, when he would suddenly present himself on a plantation, or make his entrance into a town, scornful of danger.

At the Forty-five they had direct news of him, the same as if he were a killer of bulls.

"Plumitas was at my place yesterday," said a rich farmer. "The overseer gave him thirty *duros* and he went away after breakfast."

They patiently tolerated this contribution and did not communicate the news to any but their friends. A denunciation meant declarations and all kinds of turmoil. Of what use? The civil guard pursued the bandit fruit-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

lessly and when he became angry with the informers their property was at the mercy of his vengeance, utterly unprotected.

The Marquis talked about Plumitas and his deeds without dismay, smiling as if he were discussing a natural and inevitable calamity.

"They are poor boys that have been unlucky and have taken to the woods. My father (may he rest in peace!) knew the famous José María and breakfasted with him twice. I have come across many of less fame who went around doing mischief. They are like bulls; courageous, simple people. They only attack when they are pressed, growing hotter under persecution.

He had left orders at his farmhouses and at all the herders' huts on his vast territories for them to give Plumitas whatever he asked for. According to tales of the overseers and cowboys, the bandit, with the old time respect of the peasant for good and generous masters, spoke in greatest praise of him, offering to kill any one who might offend the Señor Marqués in the least. Poor fellow! For a pittance, which was what he asked when he presented himself, tired and hungry, it was not worth while to irritate him and attract his vengeance.

The breeder, who galloped alone over the plains where his bulls pastured, had a suspicion of having several times crossed Plumitas' path without recognizing him. He must be one of those gaunt-looking horsemen he met in the country solitudes with no town in sight and who raised his hand to his grimy hat, saying with respectful simplicity:

"God be with you, Señor Marqués!"

Moraima, when he talked of Plumitas, sometimes

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

glanced at Gallardo, who, with the vehemence of the neophyte, railed against the authorities because they did not protect property.

"Some fine day he'll present himself to thee at La Rincona', boy," said the Marquis with his grave drawl.

"Damn it! Well, that will not please me, Señor Marqués. Man alive! And must one pay such heavy taxes for that?"

No; it would not please him to run against that bandit on his excursions at La Rinconada. He was a brave man when killing bulls, and he forgot his life in the ring; but these professional man-killers inspired him with the terrors of the unknown.

His family was at his plantation. Señora Angustias loved country life after years spent in poverty in city houses. Carmen also enjoyed the peace of the country. Her industrious disposition inclined her to see to the work of the farm, enjoying the sweetness of ownership as she realized the extent of her property. Moreover, the leather-worker's children, those nephews and nieces who consoled her for her barrenness, needed the country air for the good of their health.

Gallardo had promised to join them, but put off his trip with all manner of pretexts. He lived in his city house without other companionship than that of Garabato, like a bachelor, and this permitted him complete liberty in his relations with Doña Sol. He thought this the happiest time of his life. Sometimes he even forgot the existence of La Rinconada and its inhabitants.

Mounted on fiery steeds he and Doña Sol rode out in the same costumes as on that day when they first met, sometimes alone, sometimes in the company of Don José,

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

who by his presence seemed to mollify the scandal of the people at this exhibition. They were going to see bulls on the pastures near Seville, to test calves in the Marquis' herds, and Doña Sol, eager for danger, was enraptured when a young bull, instead of running away, turned against her at the prick of her javelin and attacked her so that Gallardo had to rush to her rescue.

Again they went to the station at Empalme, if a shipment of bulls had been announced for the plazas which gave extra bull-fights late in the winter.

Doña Sol curiously examined this place, the most important centre of exportation for the taurine industry. Near the railroad there were extensive enclosures in which enormous boxes of gray wood, mounted on wheels, and with two lift-doors, stood by the dozens, awaiting the busy times of exhibitions, or the summer bull-fights. These boxes had travelled all over the Peninsula, carrying noble bulls to distant plazas and returning empty to be occupied by another, and yet another.

Human fraud and cunning succeeded in managing as easily as merchandise these wild beasts habituated to the freedom of the country. The bulls that were to be sent off on the train came galloping along a broad dusty road between two barbed wire fences. They came from far away pastures, and as they drew near Empalme their drivers started them on a disorderly race, so as to deceive them more completely by their scurrying speed. In advance, at full gallop, rode the overseers and herders, with pikes over their shoulders, followed by the prudent leaders covering the others with enormous horns, showing them to be old cattle. After them trotted the fierce bulls, the wild beasts destined for death, marching

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

well flanked by tame bulls, who prevented their getting out of the road, and by strong cow-boys who ran, sling in hand, ready to check with an unerring stone the pair of horns that separated from the group.

When they reached the enclosures the advance riders separated, remaining outside the gate, and the whole troop of bulls, an avalanche of dust, kicking, bellowing, and bell ringing, rushed impetuously into the place, the barricade suddenly closing behind the tail of the last animal. People astride the walls or peering through the galleries excited them with shouts or by waving hats. They crossed the first enclosure, not noticing that they were shut in, but as though they still ran in the open country. The leaders, taught by experience and obedient to the herders, stood to one side as soon as they went through the door, letting the whirlwind of bulls that ran snorting after them, pass quietly through. They only stopped, with surprise and uncertainty, in the second enclosure, seeing the wall ahead of them, and as they turned, they found the gate closed in the rear.

Then the boxing up began. One by one the bulls were urged, by the waving of rags, by shouts and blows, toward a little lane in the centre of which was placed the travelling box with its lift-doors. It was like a little tunnel at the end of which could be seen the open space of other grassy enclosures and leaders that walked peacefully about; a fiction of a far-away pasture which attracted the wild beast.

He advanced slowly along the lane, now suspicious of danger and fearing to set his feet on the gently sloping gangway that led to the box mounted on wheels. The bull divined peril in this little tunnel which presented

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

itself before him as an inevitable passage. He felt on his hind quarters the goad that urged him along the lane, obliging him to advance; he saw above him two rows of people looking over the barriers and exciting him with gesticulations and whistles. From the roof of the box, where the carpenters were hidden ready to let the doors fall, hung a red rag, waving in the rectangle of light framed by the other exit. The pricks, the shouts, the shapeless mass that danced before his eyes as if defying him, and the sight of his tranquil companions pastured on the other side of the passage, finally decided him. He began to run through the little tunnel; he made the wooden inclined plane tremble with his weight, but he had scarcely entered the box when the door in front fell, and before he could turn back the one behind him slid down.

The loud grating of the locks was heard and the animal was swallowed up in darkness and silence, a prisoner in a little space wherein he could only lie down with his legs doubled up. Through a trap in the roof armfuls of forage fell upon him; men pushed the perambulating dungeon on its little wheels toward the nearby railroad, and immediately another box was placed in the passage, repeating the deception, until all the animals for the *corrida* were ready to start on their journey.

Doña Sol admired these proceedings in the great national industry with all her enthusiasm for "color," and longed to imitate the overseers and cow-boys. She loved life in the open, the gallop over the immense plains followed by sharp horns and bony foreheads that could give death with the slightest movement. Her soul overflowed with strong love for the pastoral life which we

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

all feel sometimes within us, as an inheritance from remote ancestors in that epoch in which man, not yet knowing how to extract riches from the womb of the earth, lived by gathering the beasts together and depending on their products for his sustenance. To be a herder, and a herder of wild beasts, seemed to Doña Sol the most interesting and heroic of professions.

Gallardo, when he had overcome the first intoxication of his good luck, contemplated the lady in wonder in the hours when they were alone, asking himself if all women of the great world were like her. Her caprices, her versatility, astounded him. He dared not *thou* her; no, not that. She had never encouraged him to such familiarity, and once when he tried it, with hesitating tongue and trembling voice, he saw in her eyes of gilded splendor such an expression of aloofness that he drew back ashamed, returning to his old form of address.

She on the other hand used *thou* in her speech to him, as did the great gentlemen friends of the bull-fighter, but this was only in hours of intimacy. Whenever she had to write him a short note, telling him not to come because she was obliged to go out with her relatives, she used *you*, and in her letters were no other expressions of affection than the coldly courteous ones which she might employ when writing to a friend of the lower class.

"That *gachí!*" murmured Gallardo disheartened. "It seems as if she has always lived with scrubs who might show her letters to everybody and she is afraid. Anybody would say she does n't think me a gentleman because I am a *matador!*"

Other peculiarities of the great lady made the bull-fighter sulky and sad. Sometimes, when he presented

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

himself at her house, one of those servants who looked like fine gentlemen in reduced circumstances coldly barred the way. "The Señora is not in. The Señora has gone out." And he guessed it was a lie, feeling Doña Sol's presence a short distance away on the other side of door and curtains. No doubt she was getting tired, was feeling a sudden aversion to him, and just at the moment of the call gave orders to her servants not to receive him.

"Well; the coal is burned up!" said he as he walked away. "I'll never come back again. That *gachí* is amusing herself with me."

But when he returned he was ashamed of having believed in the possibility of not seeing Doña Sol again. She received him holding out to him white firm arms like those of an Amazon, her eyes wide and wandering, with a strange light that seemed to reflect mental disorder.

"Why dost thou perfume thyself?" she complained, as though she perceived the most repugnant odors. "It is something unworthy of thee. I wish thee to smell of bulls, of horses. What rich odors! Dost thou not love them? Tell me yes, Juanín; beast of God, my animal!"

One afternoon the bull-fighter, seeing her inclined to confidences, felt curiosity regarding her past and asked about the kings and great personages who, according to gossip, had crossed Doña Sol's life.

She responded with a cold look in her light eyes.

"And what does that matter to thee? Thou art jealous, maybe? And even if it were true, what then?"

She remained silent a long while, her gaze wandering,

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

her look of madness accompanied always by fantastic thoughts.

"Thou must have beaten women," she said, looking at him with curiosity. "Deny it not. That would greatly interest me! Not thy wife; I know that she is good. I mean other women, all those that bull-fighters meet; the women that love with more fury the more they are beaten. No? Truly hast thou never beaten one?"

Gallardo protested with the dignity of a brave man, incapable of ill-treating those who were not so strong as he. Doña Sol showed a certain disappointment on hearing his explanations.

"Some day thou must beat me. I want to know what that is." She spoke with resolution, and then her face clouded, her brows met, a blue effulgence animated the gold dust of her pupils.

"No, my strong man; mind me not; risk it not. Thou wouldst come out the loser."

The advice was valid and Gallardo had occasion to remember it. One day, in a moment of intimacy, a somewhat rude caress from his bull-fighter hands awoke the fury of this woman who was attracted to the fellow—and hated him at the same time. "Take that!" And her right hand, clenched and hard as a club, gave a blow up and down the swordsman's jaw, with an accuracy that seemed to follow fixed rules of defence.

Gallardo was stupefied with pain and shame, while the lady, as if she understood the suddenness of her aggression, tried to justify it with a cold hostility.

"That is to teach thee a lesson. I know what you are, you bull-fighters. If I should let myself be trampled on once thou wouldst end by flogging me every day

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

like a gypsy of Triana. That was well done. Distances must be preserved."

One afternoon, in the early spring, they were returning from a testing of calves in the Marquis' pasture. He, with a troop of horsemen, rode along the highway. Doña Sol, followed by the swordsman, turned her horse through the fields, enjoying the elasticity of the sod under the horses' feet. The setting sun dyed the verdure of the plain a soft purple, the wild flowers dotted it with white and yellow. Across this expanse, on which the colors took the ruddy tone of distant fire, the shadows of the riders were outlined, long and slender. The spears they carried on their shoulders were so gigantic in the shadow that their dark lines were lost on the horizon. On one side shone the course of the river like a sheet of reddish steel—half hidden in the grass. Doña Sol looked at Gallardo with imperious eyes.

"Put thy arm around my waist!"

The swordsman obeyed and thus they rode, the two horses close together, the riders united from the waist up. The lady contemplated their blended shadows through the magic light of the meadow moving ahead of their slow march.

"It seems as though we were living in another world," she murmured, "a world of legend; something like the scenes one sees on tapestries or reads of in books of knight errantry; the knight and the Amazon travelling together with the lance over the shoulder, enamoured and seeking adventure and danger. But thou dost not understand that, beast of my soul. Isn't it true that thou dost not comprehend me?"

The bull-fighter smiled, showing his wholesome, strong

THE SPANISH WILD BEAST

teeth of gleaming whiteness. She, as if charmed by his rude ignorance, pressed her body against his, letting her head fall on his shoulder and trembling at the caress of Gallardo's breath upon her neck. Thus they rode in silence. Doña Sol seemed to be sleeping. Suddenly she opened her eyes and in them shone that strange expression that was a forerunner of the most extravagant questions.

"Tell me, hast thou ever killed a man?"

Gallardo was agitated, and in his astonishment drew away from Doña Sol. Who? He? Never! He was a good fellow who had made his way without doing harm to anybody. He had scarcely ever quarrelled with his companions in the *capeas*, not even when they kept the copper coins because they were stronger. A few fisticuffs in some disputes with his comrades in the profession; a blow with a flask in a *café*; these were the sum of his deeds. He was inspired with an invincible respect for the life of man. Bulls were another thing!

"So thou hast never had a desire to kill a man? And I thought that bull-fighters — !"

The sun hid itself, the meadow lost its fantastic illumination, the light on the river went out, and the lady saw the tapestry scene she had admired so much become dark and commonplace. The other horsemen rode far in advance and she spurred her steed to join the group, without a word to Gallardo, as if she took no heed of his following her.

CHAPTER VIII

DIAMONDS IN THE RING

GALLARDO'S family returned to the city for the *fiestas* of Holy Week. He was to fight in the Easter *corrida*. It was the first time he would kill in the presence of Doña Sol since his acquaintance with her, and this troubled him and made him doubt his strength.

Besides he could not fight in Seville without a certain emotion. He would be resigned to a calamity in any other town of Spain, knowing he would not return there for a long while; but in his own city, where were his greatest enemies!

"We shall see if thou dost shine," said the manager. "Think of those who will see thee. I want thee to be the greatest man in the world."

On Holy Saturday the penning in of the bulls destined for the *corrida* took place in the small hours of the night, and Doña Sol wished to assist in this operation as *piquero*. The bulls must be conducted from the pasture ground of Tablada to the enclosures in the plaza.

Gallardo did not assist, in spite of his desire to accompany Doña Sol. The manager opposed it, alleging the necessity of his resting to be fresh and vigorous on the following afternoon. At midnight the road that leads from the pasture to the plaza was animated like a fair. The windows of the taverns were illuminated, and before them passed linked shadows moving with the

DIAMONDS IN THE RING

steps of the dance to the sound of the pianos. From the inns, the red doorways flashed rectangles of light over the dark ground, and in their interiors arose shouts, laughter, twanging of guitars, and clinking of glasses, a sign that wine circulated in abundance.

About one in the morning a horseman passed up the road at a short trot. He was the herald, a rough herder who stopped before the inns and illuminated houses, announcing that the bulls for the penning-in were to pass in a quarter of an hour, and asking that the lights be put out and all remain in silence.

This command in the name of the national *fiesta* was obeyed with more celerity than an order from high authority. The houses were darkened and their whiteness was blended with the sombre mass of the trees; the people became quiet, hiding themselves behind window-grilles, palisades, and wire-fences, in the silence of those who await an extraordinary event. On the walks near the river, one by one the gas lights were extinguished as the herder advanced announcing the penning-in.

All was silent. In the sky, above the masses of trees, the stars sparkled in the dense calm of space; below, along the ground, a slight movement was heard, as if countless insects swarmed thick in the darkness. The wait seemed long until the solemn tinkling of far away bells rang out in the cool stillness. They are coming! There they are!

Louder rose the clash and clamor of the copper bells, accompanied by a confused galloping that made the earth tremble. First passed a body of horsemen at full speed, with lances held low, gigantic in the obscure light. These were the herders. Then a troop of amateur

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

lancers, among whom was Doña Sol, panting from this mad race through the shadows in which one false step of the horse, a fall, meant death by being trampled beneath the hard feet of the ferocious herd that came behind, blind in their disorderly race.

The bells rang furiously; the open mouths of the spectators hidden in the darkness swallowed clouds of dust, and the fierce herd passed like a nightmare — shapeless monsters of the night that trotted heavily and swiftly, shaking their masses of flesh, emitting hideous bellowings, goring at the shadows, but frightened and irritated by the shouts of the under-herder who followed on foot, and by the galloping of the horsemen that brought up the rear, harassing them with goads.

The passage of this heavy and noisy troop lasted but an instant. Now there was nothing more to be seen. The crowd, satisfied at this fleeting spectacle after the long wait, came out of their hiding-places, and many enthusiasts started to run after the herd with the hope of seeing it enter the enclosures.

The amateur lancers congratulated themselves on the great success of the penning-in. The herd had come well flanked without a single bull straying or getting away or making trouble for lancers and *peones*. They were fine-blooded animals; the very best of the Marquis' herd. On the morrow, if the *maestros* showed bull-fighter pride, they were going to see great things. And in the hope of a grand *fiesta* riders and *peones* departed. One hour afterward the environs of the plaza were dark and deserted, holding in their bowels the ferocious beasts which fell quietly into the last sleep of their lives in this prison.

DIAMONDS IN THE RING

The following morning Juan Gallardo rose early. He had slept badly, with a restlessness that filled his dreams with nightmare.

He wished they would not give him *corridas* in Seville! In other towns he lived like a bachelor, forgetting his family momentarily, in a strange room in a hotel that did not suggest anything, as it contained nothing personal. But to dress himself in his glittering costume in his own bed-chamber, seeing on chairs and tables objects that reminded him of Carmen; to go out to meet danger from that house which he had built and which held the most intimate belongings of his existence, disconcerted him and produced as great uneasiness as if he were going to kill his first bull. Ah! the terrible moment of leaving, when, dressed by Garabato in the shining costume, he descended to the silent courtyard! His nephews approached him awed by the brilliant ornaments of his apparel, touching them with admiration, not daring to speak; his be-whiskered sister gave him a kiss with an expression of terror, as if he were going to his death; his *mamita* hid herself in the darkest rooms. No, she could not see him; she felt sick. Carmen was animated but very pale, her lips, purple from emotion, were compressed, her eye-lashes moved nervously in the effort to keep herself calm and when she at last saw him in the vestibule, she suddenly raised her handkerchief to her eyes, her body was shaken by tremendous sobs, and his sister and other women had to support her that she might not fall to the floor.

It was enough to daunt even the very Roger de Flor of whom his brother-in-law talked.

“Damn it! Man alive!” said Gallardo. “Not for all

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

the gold in the world would I fight in Seville, if it were not to give pleasure to my countrymen and so that the shameless brutes cannot say that I'm afraid of the home audiences."

He walked through the house with a cigarette in his mouth, stretching himself to see if his muscular arms kept their agility. He took a cup of Cazalla in the kitchen and watched his *mamita*, ever industrious in spite of her years and her flesh, moving about near the fireplaces, treating the servants with maternal vigilance, managing everything for the good government of the house.

Garabato came to announce that friends were waiting for him in the courtyard. They were enthusiastic connoisseurs, the admirers who called on him on bullfight days. The *matador* instantly forgot all his anxieties and went out smiling, his head thrown back, his bearing arrogant, as if the bulls that awaited him in the plaza were personal enemies whom he desired to face as soon as possible and make them bite the dust with his unerring sword.

The farewell was, as on other occasions, disconcerting and disturbing to Gallardo. The women fled so as not to see him go, all except Carmen, who forced herself to keep serene, and accompanied him to the door; the astonishment and curiosity of his little nephews annoyed the bull-fighter, arrogant and manful now that the hour of danger had come.

"I should think they were taking me to the gallows! Well, see you later! Don't worry, nothing is going to happen."

And he stepped into his carriage, forcing his way

DIAMONDS IN THE RING

among the neighbors and the curious grouped before his house, who wished good luck to Señor Juan.

The afternoons when the bull-fighter fought in Seville were agonizing for his family as well as for himself. They had not the same resignation as on other occasions when they had to wait patiently for nightfall and the arrival of the telegram. Here the danger was near at hand and this aroused anxiety for news and the desire to know the progress of the *corrida* every quarter of an hour.

The leather-worker, dressed like a gentleman, in a fine light woollen suit and a silky white felt hat, offered his services to the women in sending messages, although he was furious at the neglect of his illustrious brother-in-law who had not even offered him a seat in the coach! At the termination of each bull that Juan killed, he would send news of the event by one of the boys who swarmed around the plaza.

The *corrida* was a noisy success for Gallardo. As he entered the ring and heard the applause of the multitude, he felt that he had grown several inches taller. He knew the soil he trod; it was familiar; he felt it his own. The sand of the various arenas exercised a certain influence on his superstitious soul. He recollected the great plazas of Valencia and Barcelona with their whitish ground, the dark sand of the plazas of the north, and the reddish earth of the great ring of Madrid. The arena of Seville was different from the others — sand from the Guadalquivir, a deep yellow, as if it were pulverized paint. When the disembowelled horses shed their blood upon it, Gallardo thought of the colors of the national flag, that floated over the roof around the ring.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

The diverse architecture of the plazas also influenced the bull-fighter's imagination, which was readily agitated by the phantasmagoria of uneasiness. There were rings of more or less recent construction, some in Roman style, others Moorish, which had the banality of new churches where all seems empty and colorless. The plaza of Seville was a taurine cathedral of memories familiar to many generations, with its façade recalling a past century — a time when the men wore the powdered wig — and its ochre ring, which the most stupendous heroes had trod. It had known the glorious inventors of difficult feats, the perfecters of the art, the heavy champions of the *round school* with its correct and dignified bull-fighting system, the agile, gay *maestros* of the Sevillian school with their plays and mobility that set the audiences wild — and there he, too, on that afternoon, intoxicated by the applause, by the sun, by the clamor, and by the sight of a white *mantilla* and a blue-clad figure leaning over the railing of a box, felt equal to the most heroic deeds.

Gallardo seemed to fill the ring with his agility and daring, anxious to outshine his companions, and eager that the applause should be for him alone. His admirers had never seen him so great. The manager, after each one of his brave deeds, arose and shouted, defying invisible enemies hidden in the masses on the seats: "Let's see who dares say a word! The greatest man in the world!"

The second bull Gallardo was to kill Nacional drew, with skilful cape-work, to the foot of the box where sat Doña Sol in blue gown and white *mantilla*, with the Marquis and his two daughters. Gallardo walked close

DIAMONDS IN THE RING

to the barrier with sword and *muleta* in one hand, followed by the eyes of the multitude, and when he stood before the box, he looked up, taking off his cap. He was going to tender his bull to the niece of the Marquis of Moraima! Many smiled with a malicious expression. "Hurrah for the lucky boys!" He gave a half turn, throwing down his cap to end his speech, and awaited the bull which the *peones* were drawing over by the play of the cape. In a short time, managing so that the bull did not get away from this place, the *matador* accomplished his feat. He wished to kill under the very eyes of Doña Sol so that, at close range, she should see him defying danger. Each pass of his *muleta* was accompanied by acclamations of enthusiasm and shouts of fear. The horns passed close to his breast; it seemed impossible for him to escape the attacks of the bull without losing blood. Suddenly he squared himself, with the sword raised for attack, and before the audience could voice their opinions with shouts and counsel, he swiftly threw himself upon the brute and man and animal formed but a single body.

When the *matador* drew away and stood motionless, the bull ran with halting step, bellowing, with distended nostrils, his tongue hanging between his lips and the red hilt of the sword visible in his blood-stained neck. He fell a few steps away and the audience rose to its feet *en masse* as though it were a single body moved by a powerful spring; the outburst of applause and the fury of the acclamations broke out in a violent storm. There was not another brave man in the world equal to Gallardo! Could that youth ever once have felt fear?

The swordsman saluted before the box, extending

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

his arms holding the sword and *muleta*, while Doña Sol's white-gloved hands beat together in a fever of applause.

Then something flew past spectator after spectator, from the box to the barrier. It was a lady's handkerchief, the one she carried in her hand, a fragrant tiny square of batiste and lace drawn through a ring of brilliants that she presented to the bull-fighter in exchange for this honor.

Applause broke out again at this gift, and the attention of the audience, fixed until then on the *matador*, was distracted, many turning their backs to the ring, to look at Doña Sol, praising her beauty in loud voices with the familiarity of Andalusian gallantry. A small, hairy triangle, still warm, was passed from hand to hand from the barrier to the box. It was the bull's ear, which the *matador* sent in testimony of his *brindis*.

At the close of the bull-fight, news of Gallardo's great success spread throughout the city. When he arrived at his house the neighbors awaited him at the door, applauding him as if they had actually witnessed the *corrida*.

The leather-worker, forgetting his anger at the swordsman, candidly admired him, though more for his valuable friendship than for his success as a bull-fighter. He had long kept his eye on a certain position which he no longer doubted his ability to get, now that his brother-in-law had friends among the best in Seville.

"Show them the ring. See, Encarnación, what a fine gift! Not even Roger de Flor himself — !"

And the ring was passed around among the women, who admired it with exclamations of enthusiasm. Only Carmen made a wry face when she saw it. "Yes, very

DIAMONDS IN THE RING

pretty," and she passed it to her sister-in-law, as though it burned her hands.

After this bull-fight, the season of travel began for Gallardo. He had more contracts than in any previous year. Following the *corrida* in Madrid he had to fight in all the rings in Spain. His manager studied train schedules and made interminable calculations for the guidance of his *matador*.

Gallardo passed from success to success. He had never felt in better spirits. It seemed as though he carried a new force within him. Before the bull-fights cruel doubts assailed him, anxieties he had never felt in the hard times when he was just beginning to make a name for himself; but the moment he entered the ring these fears vanished and he displayed a fierce courage accompanied ever by great success.

After his work, in whatever plaza of the provinces, he returned to his hotel followed by his *cuadrilla*, for they all lived together. He seated himself, glowing with the pleasant fatigue of triumph, without removing his glittering costume, and the connoisseurs of the community came to congratulate him. He had been colossal! He was the greatest bull-fighter in the world. That stab when he killed the fourth bull!

"Is it really so?" asked Gallardo with infantile pride. "That was n't bad, sure."

And with the interminable verbosity of all conversation about bulls, time passed unheeded by the bull-fighter and his admirers, who never tired of talking of the *corrida* of the afternoon and of others that had taken place some years before. Night closed in, lights were brought, yet the devotees did not go. The *cuadrilla*, obed-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

ient to the discipline of the profession, silently listened to their gossip at one end of the room. Until the *maestro* gave them permission, the boys could not go to dress and eat. The *picadores*, fatigued by the heavy iron armor on their legs and by the terrific falls from their horses, shifted their beaver hats from knee to knee; the *banderilleros*, prisoners in their garments of silk, wet with sweat, were hungry after an afternoon of violent exercise. All had but a single thought and cast terrible glances at the enthusiasts.

“But when will these tiresome old uncles go? Damn their souls!”

Finally the *matador* remembered them. “You may retire.” And the *cuadrilla* went out crowding each other like a school set free, while the *maestro* continued listening to the praises of the “intelligent,” without thinking of Garabato who silently awaited the moment of undressing him.

During his days of rest, the *maestro*, free from the excitement and danger of glory, turned his thoughts to Seville. Now and then he received one of those brief, perfumed little notes. Ah! if he had Doña Sol with him!

In this continual travel from one audience to another, adored by the enthusiasts, who desired to have him spend a pleasant time in their town, he met women and attended entertainments gotten up in his honor. He always went away from these feasts with his brain clouded by wine and in a fit of ferocious sadness that made him intractable. He felt a cruel desire to ill-treat the women. It was an irresistible impulse to revenge himself for the aggressiveness and caprices of that other woman on those of her own sex.

DIAMONDS IN THE RING

There were moments when it was necessary to confide his sorrows to Nacional with that irresistible impulse to confession felt by those who carry a great weight on their minds. Moreover the *banderillero* awoke in him, when far from Seville, a greater affection, a reflected tenderness. Sebastián knew of his love affair with Doña Sol. He had seen it, although from afar, and she had often laughed on hearing Gallardo tell of the *banderillero's* eccentricities.

Nacional received the *maestro's* confidences with an expression of severity.

"The thing thou shouldst do, Juan, is to forget that lady. Remember that peace in the family is worth more than anything else for us who go about the world exposed to the danger of coming home useless forever. Remember that Carmen knows more than thou dost think. She knows everything. She has asked indirect questions even of me about thy affairs with the Marquis' niece. Poor girl! It is a sin that thou shouldst make her suffer. She has her temper, and if she lets it loose she'll give thee trouble."

But Gallardo, far from his family, his thought dominated by the memory of Doña Sol, seemed not to understand the dangers of which Nacional discoursed, and he shrugged his shoulders at such sentimental scruples.

He needed to speak his thoughts, to make his friend participate in his past joys, with the pride of a satisfied lover who wishes to be admired in his happiness.

"But thou dost not know that woman! Thou, Sebastián, art an unfortunate fellow that knowest not the best in life. Imagine all the women of Seville put together! Nothing! Imagine all those of all the towns

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

where we have been! Nothing, either! There is only Doña Sol. When one knows a lady like that one has no mind for any other. If thou didst know her as I do, boy! The woman of our kind smell of clean flesh, of white clothing. But this one, Sebastián, this one! Imagine all the roses of the gardens of the Alcázar together. No, it is something better; imagine jasmine, honeysuckle, and perfume of vines like those that must grow in the garden of Paradise. But her sweet odors come from within, as if she did not put them on, as if they came from her very blood. And besides, she is not one of those who, once seen, are forever the same. With her there is always something yet to be desired; something one longs for and that does n't come. In fine, Sebastián, I cannot explain myself well—but thou knowest not what a lady is; so preach not to me and shut thy beak."

Gallardo no longer received letters from Seville. Doña Sol was travelling in foreign lands. He saw her once when he fought at San Sebastián. The beautiful lady was at Biarritz and she came in company with some French women who wished to meet the bull-fighter. He saw her one afternoon. She went away and he had only vague knowledge of her during the summer through the few letters he received and through the news his manager communicated from chance words dropped by the Marquis of Moraima.

She was at elegant watering-places whose very names Gallardo heard for the first time, and they were of impossible pronunciation for him; then he heard that she was travelling in England; afterward that she had gone on to Germany to hear some operas sung in a wonderful theatre that only opened its doors a few weeks each year.

DIAMONDS IN THE RING

Gallardo lost faith in ever seeing her again. She was a bird of passage, venturesome and restless, and he dared not hope that she would seek her nest in Seville again when winter returned. This possibility saddened him and revealed the power this woman had exercised over his body and his mind. Never to see her again? Why then expose his life and be celebrated? Of what use was the applause of the multitude?

His manager tried to soothe him. She would return; he was sure. She would return, if only for a year. Doña Sol, with all her mad caprices, was a practical woman, who knew how to look out for her property. She needed the Marquis' help to unravel the business tangles of her own fortune and that which her husband had left her, both diminished by a long and luxurious sojourn far from home.

Gallardo returned to Seville at the end of the summer. He still had a goodly number of autumn bull-fights, but he wished to take advantage of nearly a month of rest. His family was at the seashore at Sanlúcar, for the health of the little nephews, who needed the salt-water cure.

Gallardo was overcome with emotion when his manager announced one day that Doña Sol had just arrived, unexpected by any one. He went to see her immediately, but after a few words he felt intimidated by her frigid amiability and the expression of her eyes.

She gazed at him as if he were a stranger. He divined in her manner a certain surprise at the bull-fighter's rough exterior, at the difference between herself and this youth, a mere killer of beasts. He also divined the gulf that had opened between the two. She seemed to

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

him a different woman; a great dame of another land and race.

They chatted pleasantly. She seemed to have forgotten the past, and Gallardo lacked the courage to remind her of it, nor did he dare to make the slightest advance, fearing one of her outbursts of anger.

"Seville!" said Doña Sol. "Very pretty—very agreeable. But there are other places in the world. I tell you, Gallardo, that some day I am going to take my flight forever. I foresee that I am going to be very much bored here. It seems to me my Seville has changed."

She no longer *thou*-ed him. Several days passed before the bull-fighter dared to remind her of other times during his calls. He limited himself to contemplating her in silence, with his moist, adoring Moorish eyes.

"I am bored. I may leave any day," exclaimed the lady at every one of their interviews.

Once again the servant with the imposing air met the bull-fighter at the inner gate and told him the Señora had gone out when he knew for a certainty she was in the house.

Gallardo told her one afternoon about a short excursion he must take to his plantation at La Rinconada. He must look at some olive orchards his manager had bought during his absence to add to his estate; he must also acquaint himself with the progress of the work on the plantation.

The idea of accompanying the *matador* on this excursion occurred to Doña Sol and made her smile at its absurdity and daring. To go to that hacienda where Gallardo's family spent a part of the year! To invade

DIAMONDS IN THE RING

with the scandalous audacity of irregularity and sin that tranquil atmosphere of domestic life where the poor youth lived with those of his own home! The very absurdity of the idea decided her. She would go; it would interest her to see La Rinconada.

Gallardo was afraid. He thought of the people on the plantation, of the gossips who would tell his family about this trip. But the look in Doña Sol's eyes overthrew his scruples. Who could tell! Maybe this trip would bring back the old situation.

He wished, however, to offer a final obstacle to this desire.

"And Plumitas? Remember about him; they say that he is around La Rinconada."

"Ah! Plumitas!" Doña Sol's countenance, clouded by *ennui*, seemed to clear by a sudden flash from within. "How charming! I would be delighted if you could present him."

Gallardo arranged the trip. He had expected to go alone, but Doña Sol's company obliged him to take an escort for fear of an unhappy adventure on the road. He sought Potaje, the *picador*. He was a rough fellow, and feared nothing in the world but his gypsy wife, who, when she grew tired of taking beatings, tried to bite him. No need to give explanations to him — only wine in abundance. Alcohol and the atrocious falls in the ring kept him in a perpetual state of stupidity, as if his head buzzed and prevented him from saying more than a few words and permitted him but a clouded vision of things in general.

Gallardo also ordered Nacional to go with them; one more, and that was discretion beyond all doubt.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

The *banderillero* obeyed from force of habit but grumbled when he heard that Doña Sol was going with them.

"By the life of the blue dove! Must a father of a family see himself mixed up in these ugly affairs! What will Carmen and Seña' Angustias say about me if they find it out?"

When he found himself in the open country, placed beside Potaje on the seat of an automobile, in front of the *matador* and the great lady, his anger little by little vanished. He could not see her well, hidden as she was in a great blue veil that fell from her travelling cap and floated over her yellow silk coat; but she was very beautiful. And such conversation! And such knowledge of things!

Before half the journey was over, Nacional, with his twenty-five years of marital fidelity, excused the weakness of the *matador*, and made vain efforts to explain his enthusiasm to himself.

"Whoever found himself in the same situation would do the same.

"Education! A fine thing, capable of giving respectability to even the greatest sins."

CHAPTER IX

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

LET him tell thee who he is — or else let the devil take him. Damn the luck! Can't a man sleep?"

Nacional heard this answer through the door of his master's room, and transmitted it to a *peón* belonging to the hacienda who stood waiting on the stairs.

"Let him tell thee who he is! Unless he does, the master won't get up."

It was eight o'clock. The *banderillero* peeped out of the window, following with his gaze the *peón* who ran along the road in front of the plantation until he came to the farther end of the wire fence that surrounded the estate. Near the entrance to this enclosure he saw a man on horseback,— so small in the distance, both man and horse seemed to have stepped out of a box of toys.

The laborer soon returned, after having talked with the horseman. Nacional, interested in these goings and comings, received him at the foot of the stairs.

"He says he must see the master," faltered the *peón*. "He looks like an ill-tempered fellow. He says he wants the master to come down at once because he's got news for him."

The *banderillero* hastened up-stairs to pound on the master's door again, paying no attention to his protests. He must get up; it was late for the country and that man might bring an important message.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

"I'm coming!" said Gallardo, gruffly, without rising from his bed.

Nacional peeped out again and saw that the horseman was advancing along the road toward the farmhouse.

The *peón* ran out with the answer. He, poor man, seemed nervous, and in his two dialogues with the *banderillero* stammered with an expression of fear and doubt as though not daring to reveal his thoughts. When he joined the man on horseback, he listened to him a few moments and then returned on a run toward the house, this time with even more precipitation. Nacional heard him come up the stairs with no abatement of speed, till he stood before him, trembling and pale.

"It's Plumitas, Señor Sebastián! He says he's Plumitas and that he must talk to the master. My heart told me that the minute I saw him."

Plumitas! The voice of the *peón*, in spite of his stammering and his panting with fatigue, seemed to pierce the walls and scatter through every room as he pronounced this name. The *banderillero* was struck dumb with surprise. The sound of oaths accompanied by the swish of clothing and the thud of a body that hastily flung itself out of bed were heard in the master's room. In the one Doña Sol occupied there was a sudden activity that seemed to respond to the tremendous news.

"But, damn him! What does that man want with me? Why does he intrude himself at La Rinconada? And especially just now!"

It was Gallardo who rushed madly out of his room, with only his trousers and jacket hurriedly thrown on over his under-clothing. He ran past the *banderillero*, and threw himself down the stairs, followed by Nacional.

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

The rider was dismounting before the door. A herder was holding the reins of the mare and the other workmen formed a group a short distance away, contemplating the newcomer with curiosity and respect.

He was a man of medium stature, stocky rather than tall, full-faced, blonde, and with short strong limbs. He was dressed in a gray blouse trimmed with black braid, dark, well-worn breeches with a double thickness of cloth on the inside of the leg, and leathern leggings cracked by sun, rain, and mud. Under his blouse his girth was enlarged by the addition of a heavy girdle and a cartridge-belt, to which were added the bulkiness of a heavy revolver and a formidable knife. In his right hand he carried a repeating carbine. A hat which had once been white covered his head, its brim flapping and worn ragged by the inclement weather. A red handkerchief knotted around his neck was the gayest adornment of his person.

His countenance, broad and chub-cheeked, had the placidity of a full moon. His cheeks still revealed the fair skin through their heavy tan; the sharp points of a blonde beard, not shaven for many days, protruded, gleaming like old gold in the sunlight. His eyes were the only disquieting feature of his kindly face, which looked like that of a village sacristan; eyes small and triangular, sunken in bubbles of fat — narrow eyes, that reminded one of the eyes of pigs, with a wicked pupil of dark blue.

When Gallardo appeared at the door of the farmhouse the bandit recognized him instantly and lifted his hat from his round head.

"God give you good-day, Señor Juan," he said with the grave courtesy of the Andalusian country people.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

"Good-day."

"The family well, Señor Juan?"

"Well, thanks, and yours?" asked the *matador* with the automatism of custom.

"Well, also, I believe. I haven't seen them for some time."

The two men had drawn near together, examining one another at close range with simple frankness as though they were two travellers met in the open country. The bull-fighter was pale and his lips were compressed to hide his emotion. Did the bandit think he was going to scare him? On another occasion perhaps this visit would have frightened him; but now, having upstairs whom he had, he felt equal to fighting him as though he were a bull, should he announce any evil intentions.

Some seconds passed in silence. All the men of the plantation who had not gone to their labors in the field, obsessed by the dark fame of his name, contemplated this terrible personage with an amazement that had in it something infantile.

"Can they take the mare to the stable to rest a little?" asked the bandit.

Gallardo made a sign and a boy tugged at the animal's reins, leading her away.

"Care for her well," said Plumitas. "Remember that she's the best thing I've got in the world and that I love her more than my wife and children."

Potaje now came out with his shirt unbuttoned, stretching himself with all the brutal bigness of his athletic body. He rubbed his eyes, always blood-shot and inflamed from abuse of drink, and striding up to the bandit he let a great rough hand fall on one of his

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

shoulders with studied familiarity, as if he enjoyed making him wince beneath his fist, but expressing to him at the same time a rude sympathy.

"How art thou, Plumitas?"

He had not seen him before. The bandit shrank back as though to spring from this rude caress, and his right hand raised his rifle, but the blue eyes, fastened on the *picador*, seemed to recognize him.

"Thou art Potaje, if I don't deceive myself. I have seen thee stir up the bulls at Seville and in other plazas. Comrade, what terrible falls thou hast suffered! How strong thou art! As though made of iron."

And to return his greeting, he grasped one of Potaje's arms with his callous hand, feeling his muscle with a smile of admiration. The two stood gazing at one another with affectionate eyes. The *picador* laughed sonorously.

"Ho! Ho! I imagined thee a bigger man, Plumitas. But it matters not; take thee altogether, thou art a fine fellow."

The bandit turned to Gallardo:

"Can I breakfast here?"

Gallardo made a gesture of the *gran señor*.

"Nobody who comes to La Rincona' goes without breakfasting."

They all entered the kitchen of the farmhouse, a vast room with a bell-shaped chimney, the habitual place of these gatherings.

The *matador* seated himself in an armchair; the farmer's daughter busied herself putting on his shoes, for he had rushed down in his slippers.

Nacional, wishing to show signs of existence and tran-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

quillized now by the courteous aspect of the visitor, appeared with a bottle of native wine and glasses.

"I know thee, also," said the bandit with as much politeness as to the *picador*. "I have seen thee lodge the *banderillas*. When thou wishest thou dost it well; but thou shouldst get closer."

Potaje and the *maestro* laughed at this counsel. When he went to raise his glass, Plumitas was embarrassed by his carbine, which he held between his knees.

"Say, man, put that down," said the *picador*. "Must thou keep on guard even when thou goest on a visit?"

The bandit grew serious. It was all right where it was; it was his custom. The rifle accompanied him always, even when he slept. And this allusion to the weapon, which was like an additional member, ever united to his body, turned him grave again. He looked in all directions with a nervous restlessness. Anxiety showed in his face the habit of living alert, of trusting nobody, with no other reliance than his own strength, having a presentiment of danger near him every hour.

A herder walked through the kitchen in the direction of the door.

"Where's that man going?"

As he said this he rose in his seat, drawing the rifle towards his breast with his knees.

He was bound for a large field nearby where the farm laborers were working. Plumitas settled himself peacefully again.

"Listen, Señor Juan. I have come for the pleasure of seeing you and because I know you are a gentleman, incapable of breathing a whisper against me. Besides, you

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

must have heard talk of Plumitas. 'Tis not easy to catch him and whoever does it shall pay for it."

The *picador* intervened before his *maestro* could speak.

"Plumitas, don't be silly. Here thou art among comrades while thou dost behave and carry thyself decently."

And the bandit, becoming suddenly relieved, began to talk to the *picador* about his mare, boasting of her merits. The two men met on a common ground of enthusiasm as fearless riders, which caused them to regard horses with more affection than people.

Gallardo, still somewhat restless, walked about the kitchen, while the brown, broad-shouldered women of the farm stirred the fire and prepared breakfast, looking out of the corners of their eyes at the celebrated Plumitas. In one of his evolutions he drew near Nacional. He must go to Doña Sol's room and beg her not to come down. The bandit would surely go after breakfast. Why let herself be seen by this annoying personage?

The *banderillero* disappeared, and Plumitas noticing that the *maestro* was taking no part in the conversation, turned to him, asking him with interest about the rest of the season's bull-fights.

"I am a Gallardist, you know. I have applauded you more times than you can imagine. I have seen you in Seville, in Jaén, in Córdoba, in many places."

Gallardo was surprised at this. How could he, who had a veritable army of persecutors at his heels, quietly attend bull-fights? Plumitas smiled with an expression of superiority.

"Bah! I go where I wish. I am everywhere."

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Then he told of the occasions when he had seen the *matador* on the way to the plantation, sometimes accompanied, sometimes alone, passing him close in the road without being noticed, as though he were a humble herder riding on his nag to carry a message to some nearby hut.

"When you came from Seville to buy the two mills you have below, I met you on the road. You were carrying five thousand *duros*. Were you not? Tell the truth. You see I know all about it. Again I saw you in one of those 'animals' they call automobiles, with another gentleman from Seville, your manager, I think. You were going to sign the papers for the Priests' olive orchard and you were carrying a still larger bag of money."

Gallardo little by little recalled the exactness of these facts, and looked with astonishment at this man who was informed of everything. And the bandit went on to tell how little respect he had for obstacles.

"You see those things they call automobiles? Mere trifles! Such vermin I stop with nothing but this." And he touched his rifle. "In Córdoba I had accounts to settle with a rich *señor* who was my enemy. I planted my mare on one side of the road and when the beast came along, raising dust and stinking of petroleum, I shouted 'Halt!' It would n't stop, and I let the thing that goes around the wheel have a ball. To abbreviate: the auto stopped a little farther on and I set out at a gallop to join the *señor* and settle accounts. A man that can send a ball where he wants to can stop anything on the road."

Gallardo listened in astonishment to Plumitas' calm professional talk of his deeds on the highway.

"There was no reason for stopping you. You do not

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

belong to the rich. You spring from the poor as I do, but with better luck, with more of fortune in your work than I, and if you have made money you have well earned it. I have great respect for you, Señor Juan. I like you because you are a brave *matador* and I have a weakness for valiant men. We two are almost comrades; we both live by exposing our lives. So, although you did not know me, I was there, watching you pass, without even asking for a cigarette, to see that nobody dared so much as touch one of your finger nails; to see that no shameless fellow took advantage of you by riding out into the road and saying he was Plumitas, for stranger things have happened."

An unexpected apparition ended the bandit's speech and moved the bull-fighter's countenance to anger. "Damn it! Doña Sol!" But had n't Nacional given her his message? The *banderillero* followed the lady, and as he stood in the kitchen door he made gestures of despair to indicate to the *maestro* that his prayers and counsel had been useless.

Doña Sol came in wearing her travelling cloak, her golden hair loosely combed and knotted in all haste. Plumitas at the plantation! What joy! She had been thinking of him half the night with sweet thrills of terror, proposing to herself to ride over all the lonely places near La Rinconada, hoping good luck would cause her to fall in with the interesting bandit. And, as if her thoughts had exercised a power of attraction, the highwayman had obeyed her desires and presented himself at the plantation early in the morning!

Plumitas! That name brought to her mind the typical figure of a bandit. She hardly needed to meet him; she

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

would scarcely experience surprise. She imagined him tall, well-formed, well-browned, with a three-cornered hat above a red handkerchief, from beneath which fell jet black curls; his agile body dressed in black velvet; his tapering waist bound by a belt of purple silk; his legs encased in date-colored leather leggings — a knight errant of the Andalusian steppes, almost like those elegant tenors she had seen in “Carmen” who discard the soldiers’ uniform and become contrabandists for the sake of love.

Her eyes, wide with curiosity, wandered over the kitchen without finding a three-cornered hat or an ancient fire-lock. She saw an unknown man who rose to his feet; a kind of a country guard with a carbine, like those she had often met on the family estates.

“Good-day, Señora Marquesa. And your uncle, the Marquis, does he keep well?”

The gaze of all, converging upon this man, told her the truth. Ah! this was Plumitas!

He had removed his hat with rough courtesy, embarrassed by the lady’s presence; he continued standing, the carbine in one hand and the old felt hat in the other.

Gallardo wondered at the bandit’s words. The man knew everybody. He knew who Doña Sol was and with a respectful impulse he gave her the family title.

The lady, recovering from her surprise, made a sign for him to be seated and to cover himself, but, although he obeyed the former, he put his hat on a nearby chair. As if divining a question in Doña Sol’s eyes, which were fixed on him, he added:

“Let the Señora Marquesa not be surprised that I know her; I have seen her many times with the Marquis

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

and other gentlemen when they were going to test calves. I have also seen from a distance how the lady attacked the beasts. The Señora is very brave and the finest girl I have seen in this, God's own country! It is perfect joy to see her on horseback, with her three-cornered hat, her cravat, and her belt. The men must follow in crowds after her heavenly little eyes!"

The bandit allowed himself to be drawn by his Southern enthusiasm into the greatest frankness, seeking new expressions of praise for the lady.

She turned pale, her eyes grew large with happy terror, and she began to find the bandit interesting. Could he have come to the plantation solely on her account? Did he intend to kidnap her and carry her away to his hiding-place in the mountains with the hungry rapacity of a bird of prey who returns from the plain to his nest on the heights?

The bull-fighter also grew alarmed on hearing these expressions of rude admiration. Damn it! In his own house and in his very face! If this kept up he was going upstairs after his gun, and even though this were Plunitas, they should see who would have her!

The bandit suddenly seemed to understand the annoyance his words caused and he adopted a respectful attitude.

"Pardon, Señora Marquesa. It is only banter. I have a wife and four children. The poor girl weeps more on my account than ever wept the Virgin of Agonies. I am a peaceful Moor; an unfortunate fellow that is what he is because an evil shadow follows him."

And as though he took pains to be agreeable to Doña Sol, he broke out into enthusiastic praises of her family.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

The Marquis of Moraima was one of the men he most respected in all the world.

"If all the rich were like that! My father worked for him, and told us about his charity. I had the fever in a herder's hut in a pasture of his. He knew it but he said nothing. At his farmhouses he leaves an order for them to give me what I ask and to leave me in peace. Such things are never forgotten. When I least expect it I meet him alone, mounted on his horse like a young fellow, as if he did not feel the passing of the years. 'God be with you, Señor Marqués.' 'Greeting, boy.' He does not guess who I am because I carry my companion"—and he motioned to his carbine—"under my blanket. I long to stop him and ask his hand, not to clasp it, no, not that; how could such a good man clasp hands with me, who have so many killed and maimed to my account? No, to kiss it, as though he were my father, to kneel before him and give him thanks for what he does for me."

The earnestness with which he spoke of his gratitude did not move Doña Sol. So that was the famous Plumitas! A poor man; a mild rabbit of the plains whom all thought a wolf, deceived by his fame.

"There are also bad rich men," continued the bandit. "How some of them make the poor suffer! Near my town there is one that lends money and is meaner than Judas. I sent him word not to grind the poor so, and the vile thief, instead of paying attention to me, told the civil guard to catch me. Well, I burned a barnful of straw for him and I did other little things to him and it has been over half a year since he has dared go to Seville, or even out of the town for fear of meeting Plumitas. Another one was going to turn out a poor little old

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

woman because for a year she had n't paid the rent of the miserable hut she had held ever since her father's time. I went to see the *señor*, just at nightfall, when he was going to sit down to supper with his family. 'My master, I am Plumitas, and I need a hundred *duros*.' He gave them to me and I went to the old woman with them. 'Grandmother, take this; pay that Jew; what is left over is for you and may it serve your good health.'

Doña Sol contemplated the bandit with more interest.

"And killed?" she asked. "How many have you killed?"

"Señora, let us not speak of that," said the bandit gravely. "You would feel repugnance for me and I am only a poor, unfortunate, persecuted fellow who must defend himself as he can."

A long silence fell.

"You know not how I live, Señora Marquesa," he continued. "The wild beasts fare better than I. I sleep where I can, or I do not sleep at all. I get up in one end of the province to lie down in the other. One must keep his eye well open and his hand firm so they will respect and not betray one. The poor are good, but poverty is an ugly thing and turns the best bad. If they had n't been afraid of me they would have handed me over to the guards many times. I have no true friends but my mare and this"—holding up his carbine. "Suddenly I feel a longing to see my wife and babies, and I enter my town at night while all the people who recognize me open their eyes wide. But some day it will end wrong. There are days when I get tired of being by myself and I need to see people. Long have I wanted to come to La Rincona'. Why should I not see at close

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

range the Señor Juan Gallardo, I who appreciate him and have often applauded him? But I always saw you with many friends, or else your wife and your mother and the children were here. I understand that; they would have been scared to death at the mere sight of Plumitas. Now it is different. This time you came with the Señora Marquesa, and I said to myself: 'Let's go and greet those fine people and chat with them a while.'"

The peculiar smile that accompanied these words seemed to recognize a difference between the bull-fighter's family and the lady, and made it clear that Gallardo's relations with Doña Sol were no secret to him. Respect for the legitimacy of matrimony dwelt in the soul of this poor countryman, and he felt that he was authorized in taking greater liberties with the bull-fighter's aristocratic friend than with the poor women who composed his family.

Doña Sol paid no attention to these words and besieged the highwayman with questions, wishing to know how he had come to his present state.

"Nothing, Señora Marquesa; an injustice; one of those misfortunes that fall on us poor people. I was one of the cleverest in my town and the workmen always chose me as spokesman when there was anything to be asked of the rich. I know how to read and write. As a boy I was a sacristan and they gave me the nickname of Plumitas because I was always after the chickens to pull out their feathers for my writings."

A rough caress from Potaje's strong hand interrupted him.

"*Compadre*, the minute I saw thee I guessed that thou wert a church rat or something like that."

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

Nacional held his peace, respecting these confidences, but he smiled slightly. A sacristan converted into a bandit! What things Don Joselito would say when he told him that!

"I married my wife and we had our first baby. One night a couple of guards came to the house and took me outside the town to the threshing-floor. Some shots had been fired into a rich man's door, and those good gentlemen were determined that it was I who did it. I denied it and they beat me with their guns. I denied it again and they beat me more. To abbreviate, they kept me till daybreak, beating me all over, sometimes with the barrel, sometimes with the butt-end, until they were worn out and I lay on the ground senseless. They had me tied hand and foot, and beat me as if I were a bale of goods. And all the while they kept saying to me, 'Art thou not the bravest man in the town? Come on, defend thyself; let's see how far thy brags can carry thee.' This was what hurt most, their jibes. My poor little wife cured me as best she could, but I never rested, I could not endure the remembrance of those blows and jibes. To abbreviate again, one day one of the guards was found dead on that same threshing-floor and I, to avoid trouble, took to the mountains — and I have lived there to this day."

"Boy, thou hast a good hand," said Potaje with admiration. "And the other?"

"I don't know; he must be somewhere in the world. He left the town; he asked for transfer in spite of his bravery, but I don't forget him. I have a message for him. I get sudden news that he is on the other side of Spain and I go there; I would follow him even into the

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

very Hell itself. I leave the mare and the carbine with some friend to keep for me, and I take the train like a gentleman. I have been in Barcelona, in Valladolid, in many cities. I take my place near the jail and I look over the guards that go and come. 'This is not my man, nor this either.' They have given me wrong information, but it does n't matter. It is years since I began looking for him, but I shall find him — unless he is dead, which would be a pity."

Doña Sol followed this tale with interest. An original creature was this Plumitas! She had made a mistake in thinking him a rabbit. The bandit became silent, knitting his brows as if he feared he had said too much, and meant to avoid a new outburst of confidence.

"With your permission," he said to the swordsman, "I'll go to the stable and see how the mare has been treated. Wilt thou come along, comrade? Thou shalt see something worth while."

Potaje, accepting the invitation, went out of the kitchen with him.

When the two were left alone, the bull-fighter and the lady, he showed his ill-humor. Why had she come down? It was foolhardy to present herself before a man like that; a bandit whose name was the terror of the people.

But Doña Sol, pleased with the excellent success of her encounter, laughed at the bull-fighter's fears. The bandit seemed to her a decent man, a poor fellow whose mischievousness was exaggerated by popular fancy. He was almost a servant in her family.

"I imagined him different, but anyway I am glad I have seen him. We will give him an alms when he goes. What an original land this is! What types! And how

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

interesting his pursuit of that civil guard all over Spain! What a thrilling article one could write about that!"

The women of the ranch lifted off the flames of the fireplace two great frying-pans that shed an agreeable odor of sausage.

"Come to breakfast, gentlemen," shouted Nacional, who assumed the functions of *mayordomo* at his master's farmhouse.

In the centre of the kitchen stood a great table covered with a cloth, on which were placed round loaves of bread and numerous bottles of wine. Plumitas and Potaje and several farm hands answered the call, the overseer, the farmer, and all those who filled places of greater trust. They began seating themselves on two benches placed along the length of the table, while Gallardo glanced undecided at Doña Sol. She ought to eat upstairs in the rooms set apart for the family. But the lady, smiling at this suggestion, seated herself at the head of the table. She enjoyed rustic life and thought it interesting to eat with these people. She was born to be a soldier. And with a manly air she invited the *matador* to be seated, dilating her nostrils with a voluptuous enjoyment of the savory odor of the sausages. A very rich dish! How hungry she was!

"This is right," sententiously remarked Plumitas, looking over the table; "the masters and servants eating together, as they say was the custom in olden times. I have never seen it before." And he seated himself near the *picador*, without letting go of his carbine, which he held between his knees.

"Move over, *guasón*," he said, shoving Potaje with his body.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

The *picador*, who treated him with rude *camaraderie*, answered with another shove and the two strong fellows laughed as they pushed back and forth, amusing every one at the table by their horse-play.

"But, damn it!" said the *picador*. "Get that blunderbus out from between thy knees. Dost thou not see that it is aiming straight at me? An accident may happen."

The bandit's carbine, resting between his knees, was pointing its black muzzle at the *picador*.

"Hang that up, *malaje!*" he insisted. "Dost thou need it to eat with?"

"It's all right where it is. Never fear," answered the bandit shortly, frowning as if he did not like to hear any comments upon his precautions.

He grasped his spoon, scooped up a great piece of bread, and impelled by rural courtesy, glanced at the others to make sure that the moment for eating had arrived.

"Good health, gentlemen!"

He attacked the enormous dish that had been placed in the centre of the table for him and the two bull-fighters. Another like it steamed farther down for the farm hands. Suddenly he seemed ashamed of his voracity, and after a few spoonfuls he stopped, thinking an explanation necessary.

"Since yesterday morning I have tasted nothing but a crumb and a little milk they gave me in a herder's hut. A good appetite!"

He attacked the plate again, winking his eyes and working his jaws steadily. The *picador* invited him to drink. Intimidated in the master's presence, he gazed wistfully at the bottles of wine placed within reach of his hand.

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

"Drink, Plumitas. Dry grazing is bad. It should be moistened."

Before the bandit accepted his invitation the *picador* drank, and drank deeply. Plumitas only occasionally touched his glass after much vacillation. He was afraid of wine; he had lost the habit of drinking it. He did not always get it on the plains. Besides, wine was the worst enemy of a man like him, who must live wide awake and on guard.

"But here thou art among friends," said the *picador*. "Consider, Plumitas, that thou art in Seville, beneath the very mantle of the Virgin of Macarena. There is no one to touch thee. And if by chance the civil guards should come, I would put myself at thy side, I would grasp a spear, and we wouldn't leave one of those lazy devils alive. A little more and I would be willing to become a free-lance of the mountains! That has always attracted me."

"Potaje!" admonished the *maestro* from the end of the table, fearing the loquacity of the *picador* and his proximity to the bottles.

The bandit, in spite of drinking little, was red in the face and his eyes shone with a happy light. He had chosen his place facing the kitchen door, from which the entrance to the plantation could be seen, showing a portion of the solitary road. From time to time, a cow, a hog, a goat, passed along this belt of land, and the shadow of their bodies, outlined by the sun on the yellow ground, was enough to make Plumitas jump, ready to drop his spoon and grasp his rifle. He talked with his companions at the table, but without withdrawing his attention from what might be outside the door. It was his

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

habit to live at all hours ready for resistance or for flight, making it a point of honor never to be taken by surprise.

After he had done eating he accepted one more glass from Potaje, his last, and he sat with a hand beneath his jaw, gazing out of the door, dulled and silent by his heavy meal. His was the digestion of a boa, or a stomach accustomed to irregular nourishment by his prodigious gorgings, and to long periods of fast. Gallardo offered him an Havana.

"Thanks, Señor Juan. I don't smoke, but I will save it for a companion of mine who is in the mountains, and the poor boy will value something to smoke more than a meal itself. He is a young fellow who has had bad luck and he helps me when there is work for two."

He put the cigar in his blouse, and the recollection of this companion, who at this very hour wandered in safety far away, caused him to smile with a ferocious joy. The wine had animated Plumitas. His countenance was changed. His eyes had metallic gleams of shifting light. His puffy face contracted with a grin that seemed to dispel his habitual kindly aspect. He evinced a desire to talk, to boast of his deeds, to pay for the hospitality by astonishing his benefactors.

"You must have heard about what I did last month on the Fregenal highway. Have you really heard nothing about that? I planted myself in the road with my young companion—for we had to stop a diligence and give a message to a rich man, who has had me on his mind for a while. A domineering fellow was this man, accustomed to ordering *alcaldes*, important persons, and even civil guards at his will—what they call in the papers a *cacique*. I sent him a message asking him for a hundred *duros* for

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

a pressing need and what he did was to write to the governor of Seville, raise a row up there in Madrid, and make them chase me worse than ever. It was his fault that I had a gun-fight with the civil guards, and I came out of it shot in the leg; and still not satisfied, he asked them to imprison my wife, as if the poor thing could know where her husband was plundering. That Judas dared not stir out of his town for fear of Plumitas; but about then I disappeared. I went on a trip, one of those trips I've told you about, and my man took courage and went to Seville one day on business and to set the authorities against me."

"We lay in ambush for the coach on its return trip from Seville. My young companion, who has hands of gold for stopping anything on the road, ordered the driver to halt. I stuck my head and my carbine in at the door. Screams of women, cries of children, men who said nothing but seemed made of wax! I said to the travellers: 'Nothing is going to happen to you. Calm yourselves, ladies; greeting, gentlemen, and a good journey. But come, let that fat man step out.' And my man, cringing as if he were going to hide under the women's skirts, got down, as white as if his blood had left him, and lisping as if he were drunk. The coach drove on and we stood in the middle of the road alone. 'Listen; I am Plumitas, and I am going to give thee something that thou shalt not forget.' And I gave it to him. But I did n't kill him right off. I hit him in a place I know, so that he would live twenty-four hours, and so that when the guards gathered him up he could say it was Plumitas that had killed him. Thus there could be no mistake nor could others air themselves with importance."

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Doña Sol listened, intensely pale, her lips compressed in terror, and in her eyes the strange glitter that accompanied her mysterious thoughts. Gallardo made a wry face, disturbed at this ferocious tale.

"Every one knows his trade, Señor Juan," said Plumitas, as if he divined his thoughts. "We both live by killing; you kill bulls, and I people. Only you are rich and get the applause and the fine women, while I often go hungry and if I don't take care I will end riddled like a sieve in the open plains for the crows to eat. But you don't beat me in knowing your trade, Señor Juan! You know where to strike the bull so he will fall at once. I know where to hit a Christian so that he will fall doubled up and last a while, or else spend a few weeks remembering Plumitas, who wishes not to mix with anybody, but who knows how to settle with those who meddle with him."

Again Doña Sol felt curiosity to know the number of his crimes.

"And killed? How many people have you killed?"

"You will take a dislike to me, Señora Marquesa; but since you persist . . . Understand that I cannot recollect them all, no matter how much I want to remember. They probably amount to thirty or thirty-five; I don't know for sure. In this wandering life, who thinks of keeping accounts? But I am a luckless fellow, Señora Marquesa; an unfortunate fellow. The fault belongs to them that made me bad. That matter of killing is like eating cherries. You pull one and the others come after, by dozens. One must kill to go on living and if one feels pity he is eaten for his pains."

There was a long silence. The lady contemplated the

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

bandit's short thick hands with his uneven finger nails. But Plumitas was not looking at the Señora Marquesa. All his attention was given to the *matador* in his desire to show him gratitude for having received him at his table and to dispel the bad effect his words seemed to have upon him.

"I respect you, Señor Juan," he said. "The first time I saw you fight bulls, I said to myself, 'That's a brave fellow.' You have many devotees who admire you, but not the way I do! Believe me, that to see you, I have many times disguised myself, and gone into the towns where you were fighting the bulls with the risk of being captured. Is that devotion?"

Gallardo smiled with an affirmative nodding of his head, flattered now in his artistic pride.

"Besides," continued the bandit, "nobody can say I came to La Rincona' to ask even a piece of bread. Many times I have gone hungry or have lacked five *duros*, riding around near here, and never till to-day has it occurred to me to pass through the wire fence of the plantation. 'Señor Juan is sacred to me,' I said to myself always. 'He earns his money the same as I do, exposing his life. Comradeship must be respected.' For you will not deny, Señor Juan, that although you are a great personage, and I one of the most unfortunate of men, we are alike, we both live by playing with death. We are quietly eating here, but some day, if God tires of us and deserts us, they'll gather me up from the roadside like a mad dog shot to pieces, and you with all your capital will be carried out of a ring foot foremost; and although the papers may talk of your misfortune four weeks or so, damned little you will thank them over there in the other world."

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

"It is true — it is true," said Gallardo, with sudden pallor at the bandit's words.

The superstitious fear he felt when moments of danger drew near was reflected in his countenance. His destiny seemed similar to that of this terrible vagabond who must necessarily fall some day or other in his unequal struggle.

"But do you believe I think of death?" continued Plumitas. "I repent of nothing and I go on my way. I also have my desires and my little pride, the same as you, when you read in the papers that you did good work on such a bull and that they gave you the ear. Remember that they talk of Plumitas all over Spain, that the newspapers tell the greatest lies about me, and, according to what they say, they are going to bring me out in the theatres. Even in Madrid, in that palace where the deputies meet to hold parley, they talk of me nearly every week.

"On top of all this, the pride of having an army following my steps, of being able, a lone man, to stir the wrath of thousands who live off of the government and wield a sword! The other day, on Sunday, I entered a town at mass time and I stopped my mare in the square near some blind men who were playing the guitar and singing. The people were staring at a picture the singers had, representing a fine fellow with a three-cornered hat, whiskers, dressed in the finest style, mounted on a magnificent horse, with his blunderbuss on the horn of his saddle and a plump lass on the crupper. I stopped when I saw that the fine fellow in the picture was Plumitas! That gives pleasure. When one is condemned like Adam to work or starve, it is well to have the people imagine his existence different. I bought the paper from the blind

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

singers and I carry it here; the complete life of Plumitas, with many lies, but all set to verse. A fine thing! When I lie down on the mountain I read it to learn it by heart. Some *señor* who knows much must have written it."

The dreaded Plumitas showed an infantile pride as he talked of his glory. The silent modesty with which he entered the plantation was gone; the desire that they should forget his fame and look upon him as nothing but a poor traveller pressed by hunger had vanished. He glowed when he remembered that his name was famous and that his deeds received the honors of publicity.

"Who would have known me," he went on, "if I had kept on living in my village? I have thought much about that. We downtrodden fellows have no other recourse than to toil for others, or to follow the only career that gives money and name — killing! I was no good at killing bulls. My village is in the mountains and has no fierce cattle. Besides, I am heavy and unskilled. So I kill people. It is the best thing a poor man can do to be respected and make his way."

Nacional, who had listened to the bandit's words with silent gravity, thought it necessary to intervene.

"What the poor man needs is education: to know how to read and write."

Nacional's words provoked the laughter of all who knew his hobby.

"There thou hast let loose one of thy ideas, comrade," said Potaje. "Let Plumitas go on explaining himself, for what he says is very good."

The bandit received the *banderillero's* interruption with scorn; he had little respect for him on account of his timidity in the ring.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

"I know how to read and write. And of what use is that? When I lived in the village it only brought me into notice and made my fate seem harder. What the poor man needs is justice; let them give him what belongs to him and if they won't give it to him, let him take it. One must be a wolf and cause terror. The other wolves will then respect him, and the cattle even let him eat gratefully. If they find thee a coward and without strength, even the sheep will despise thee."

Potaje, who was now drunk, assented with enthusiasm to all Plumitas said. He did not understand his words well, but through the dark mist of his intoxication he thought he could distinguish a glow of supreme wisdom.

"That's right, comrade. A club to all the world. Go on, for thou art very clever."

"I know people," continued the bandit. "The world is divided into two families, the shearers and the shorn. I don't want to be shorn; I was born to shear, because I am very brave and am afraid of nobody. The same thing has happened to you, Señor Juan. By being of good kidney you have lifted yourself up from the common herd, but your way is better than mine."

He sat contemplating the *maestro* a while and then added with an accent of conviction: "I think, Señor Juan, that we have come into the world rather late. What deeds of valor and glory young fellows like ourselves would have done in other times! You would not kill bulls and I would not roam over the plains hunted like a wild beast. We would be viceroys, grand moguls! Some great thing across the seas! You have not heard of one Pizarro, Señor Juan?"

Señor Juan made an ambiguous gesture, not wishing

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

to reveal his ignorance of this mysterious name which he heard for the first time.

“The Señora Marquesa knows who he is better than I and she will pardon me if I say wild things. I learned that history when I was a sacristan and turned myself loose on old romances belonging to the priest. Well, Pizarro was a poor fellow like us, who crossed the sea with twelve or thirteen youths as ragged as himself, and entered a country finer than Paradise — a kingdom where lies Potosí — I need say no more. They had I don’t know how many battles with the natives of the Americas who wear feathers and carry bows and arrows, and finally they became their masters, appropriated the treasures of the kings of the country, and the least of them filled his house to the roof all with gold coins, and there was n’t one that was n’t made a marquis, a general, or a personage of power. Many others are like them. Imagine, Señor Juan, if we had only lived then! What would it have cost us for you and me and some of these stout fellows who are listening to me to do as much or more than that Pizarro?”

And the men of the plantation, ever silent, but with eyes glowing with emotion at this marvellous history, assented to the bandit’s theories, nodding their heads.

“I repeat that we are born too late, Señor Juan. Great careers are closed to the poor. The Spaniard knows not what to do. There is no longer any place left for him to go. What there used to be in the world to be divided up, now the English and other foreigners have appropriated. The door is closed and we brave men have to rot inside this barn-yard listening to hard words because we don’t surrender ourselves to our fate. I, who like enough

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

would have become a king in the Americas, or some other place, go along the roads branded as an outcast, and they even call me a thief! You, who are a valiant man, kill bulls and get applause, but I know that many gentlemen look upon bull-fighting as a low-down trade."

Doña Sol intervened to give the highwayman counsel. Why did he not become a soldier? He could go to distant lands where there were wars and utilize his powers nobly.

"Yes, I would be good for that, Señora Marquesa. I have often thought of it. When I sleep at some plantation or hide myself in my house a few days, the first time I get into bed like a Christian and eat a hot meal on a table like this, my body is grateful for it, but I soon tire, and it seems to me the mountain calls me with all its poverty, and I long to sleep in the open wrapped in my blanket with a stone for a pillow. Yes; I would make a good soldier. But where could I go? There are no longer any real wars, where each one with a handful of comrades does whatever seems wisest to him. To-day there are only herds of men all wearing the same color and the same brand, who live and die like clowns. The same thing happens as in the world: shearers and shorn. You do a great deed and the colonel appropriates it; you fight a wild beast and they give the reward to the general. No, I was also born too late to be a soldier."

Plumitas lowered his eyes, remaining a long time as if absorbed in inward contemplation of his misfortune, realizing that he had no place in the present epoch.

Suddenly he grasped his carbine, about to rise.

"I must go—many thanks, Señor Juan, for your attentions. Farewell, Señora Marquesa."

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

"But where art thou going?" said Potaje pulling him back. "Sit down, *malaje*. In no place art thou better off than here."

The *picador* desired to prolong the highwayman's stay, pleased to be able to talk with him as with a life-long friend, to be able to tell afterward in the city about his interesting adventure.

"I have spent three hours here and I must go. I never stay so long in an open, level place like La Rincona'. It may be that some one has already gone with a whisper that I am here."

"Art thou afraid of the guards?" asked Potaje. "They won't come, and if they do, I am with thee."

Plumitas made a deprecatory gesture. The guards! They were men like others; there might be brave ones, but they were all fathers of families who tried not to see him, and when they heard he was at a certain place, they came too late. They only went against him when chance threw them face to face, without means of evasion.

"Last month I was at the Five Chimneys plantation breakfasting as I am here, though not in such good company, when I saw six guards coming afoot. I am sure that they did not know I was there, and that they came only for refreshment. Bad luck, but neither they nor I could fly in plain sight of all the people on the plantation. That would cause talk, and evil tongues make one lose respect, and they will say we are all cowards. The owner of the hacienda shut the gate, and the guards began to beat on it with their muskets to make him open up. I ordered him and a herder to stand behind the doors. 'When I say *now*, open wide.' I mounted the mare and held my revolver in my hand. '*Now!*' The gate opened

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

and I rode off flinging demons! You don't know what my poor little mare can do. They sent I know not how many shots after me, but nothing! I, too, let loose as I rode away, and according to what they say, I hit two guards. To abbreviate: I went leaning along my mare's neck so they could n't hit me and the guards took their revenge by giving the men of the hacienda a beating. That's why it is better to say nothing about my visits, Señor Juan. Along will come those fellows with their cocked hats and they'll make you dizzy with questions and declarations, as though they were going to catch me with that."

The men of La Rinconada assented dumbly. They already knew it. They must keep quiet about the visit to avoid trouble, as was done in all the plantations and herders' ranches. This general silence was the bandit's most powerful aid. Moreover, all these countrymen were Plumitas' admirers. In their rude enthusiasm they looked upon him as an avenging hero. They had nothing to fear from him. His threats only weighed against the rich.

"I am not afraid of the guards," continued the bandit. "It's the poor I fear. They are all good, but what an ugly thing is poverty! I know those of the cocked hats will not kill me; they have no balls for me. If anybody kills me, it will be some poor fellow. One lets them come near without fear, because they are one's own kind, and then they take advantage of one's carelessness. I have enemies; people sworn against me. Sometimes there are rascals who carry the whisper in the hope of a few *pesetas*, or renegades who are sent to do a thing and don't do it, and one must keep a firm hand to have the



"For me!" asked the bandit in tones of surprise and wonder. "For me, Señora Marquesa?"

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

respect of all. If one really harms them the family is left to avenge him. If one is good and contents himself with giving them a caress with a handful of nettles and thistles, they remember that joke all their lives—the poor, my own kind, are those I fear.”

Plumitas stopped, and gazing at Gallardo added:

“ Besides, there are the admirers, the pupils, the young fellows that come chasing along behind. Señor Juan, tell the truth, which tire you more, the bulls, or all those hungry young bull-fighters who are always wanting favors of the *maestro*? The same thing happens to me. Did n’t I tell you that we are equals! In every town there’s some fine young fellow who dreams of being my heir and hopes to catch me some day sleeping in the shade of a tree and blow my head off. A fine advertisement it will be for him who catches Plumitas! ”

After this he got up and went to the stable followed by Potaje, and a quarter of an hour afterward he led out into the courtyard his strong mare, the inseparable companion of his wanderings. The big-boned animal seemed larger and handsomer after the brief hours of feasting in the mangers at La Rinconada. Plumitas stopped arranging his blanket over the horn to caress her flanks. She might indeed be content. Seldom would she be so well treated as at this hacienda of Señor Juan Gallardo. Now she must behave, for the journey would be long.

“ And where art thou going, comrade? ” said Potaje.

“ You should n’t ask that. Abroad through the land! I myself know not. To meet whatever comes along.”

And putting the toe of his boot in one of the blackened and mud-bespattered stirrups, he gave a spring and rose into the saddle. Gallardo moved away from Doña Sol,

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

who contemplated the bandit's preparation for his journey with her mysterious eyes, her lips pale and compressed by emotion. The bull-fighter searched in the inside of his jacket and walked toward the rider offering him without ostentation some papers crushed in his hand.

"What is that?" said the bandit. "Money? Thanks, Señor Juan. You have heard that it is best to give me something when I leave an hacienda, but that is for others, for the rich who earn their money in flowery ease. You earn it by exposing your life. We are companions. Keep it, Señor Juan."

Señor Juan put the bills back, somewhat annoyed by the bandit's refusal and by his determination to treat him as a comrade.

"You may tender me a bull if we ever meet in the ring," added Plumitas. "That is worth more than all the gold in the world."

Doña Sol advanced till she stood close to one of the horseman's legs, and unfastening an autumn rose she wore on her breast she offered it silently, gazing at him with her gold-green eyes.

"For me?" asked the bandit in tones of surprise and wonder. "For me, Señora Marquesa?"

Seeing the lady's nod of affirmation he accepted the flower with embarrassment, handling it stupidly as if it were of astonishing weight, not knowing where to put it, till at last he thrust it into a buttonhole of his blouse, between the two ends of the red handkerchief he wore around his neck.

"This surely is good!" he exclaimed, his round face broadening into a smile. "Nothing to equal this ever happened to me before in all my life."

BREAKFAST WITH THE BANDIT

The rough horseman seemed touched and disturbed at the same time by the feminine character of the gift. Roses for him — !

He pulled at his mare's reins.

"Health to all, gentlemen! Until we meet again! Health, brave fellow! Sometime I'll throw thee a cigar if thou dost stick thy lance in well."

He bade the *picador* farewell, giving him a blow with his hand, and the centaur answered him with a slap on the thigh that made the bandit's vigorous muscles tremble. What a fine fellow, that Plumitas! Potaje, in his mellow state of intoxication, wished to take to the mountains in company with him.

"*Adios! Adios!*"

And setting spurs to his steed he rode away from the hacienda at a swift trot.

Gallardo manifested satisfaction on seeing him go. Then he looked at Doña Sol, who stood motionless, following the horseman with her eyes as he vanished in the distance.

"What a woman!" murmured the swordsman with dismay. "What a mad lady!"

It was good luck that Plumitas was ugly, and went ragged and dirty like a vagabond. If not, verily she would have gone with him.

CHAPTER X

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

IT seems a lie, Sebastián. A man like thee, with a wife and children, lending thyself to such wickedness. And I thought better of thee and had confidence in thee when thou wert travelling with Juaniyo! I worried not because he went with a person of character. Where are all those fine things, the honorable ideas and thy religion? Is this what is commanded in those Jew meetings that gather at the house of Don Joselito, the teacher?"

Nacional, alarmed at the indignation of Gallardo's mother, and moved by Carmen's tears as she wept in silence, her face hidden in her kerchief, defended himself stupidly. But as he heard the last words he sat erect with priestly gravity.

"Seña' Angustia', touch not my ideas and leave Don Joselito in peace, an it please you, for he has nothing to do with all this. By the life of the blue dove! I went to La Rincona' because my *matador* ordered me. Do you know what a *cuadrilla* is? Just the same as an army: discipline and servility! The *matador* commands and one must obey. For these bull-fight customs descend from the times of the Inquisition and there is no more conservative trade."

"Clown!" screamed Señora Angustias. "Fine thou art with all thy fables about the Inquisition and Con-

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

servatives! Among you all you are killing that poor girl, who spends the whole day shedding tears like the *Dolorosa*. What thou art anxious about is to cover up my son's rascalities because he feeds thee."

"You have said it, Señá' Angustia'. Juaniyo feeds me, that's it. And since he feeds me, I have to obey him. But look here, Señora; put yourself in my place. My *matador* tells me I must go to La Rincona'. Good! And at the hour of leaving I find myself in the automobile with a very fine great lady. What can I do? My *matador* commands. Moreover, I did n't go alone. Potaje went along and he is a person of years and respect."

The bull-fighter's mother was more indignant at this excuse.

"Potaje! A bad man, that Juaniyo would not keep in his *cuadrilla* if he had any pride! Don't talk to me about that drunkard that beats his wife and keeps his children starving."

"Well, Potaje aside. I say I saw that great lady and what was I to do? She was not a wanton; she is the niece of the marquis who is patron of the *maestro* — and you well know that bull-fighters have to be on good terms with people of power. They have to live off the public. Then, at the hacienda, nothing! I swear it to you by my own dear ones — nothing! I would be a fine fellow to stand such bad business, even though my *matador* ordered me to! I am a decent man, Señá' Angustia'. By the life of the dove! When one is on the committee and is consulted on election-day, and counsellors and deputies clasp this hand you see here, can one do certain things? I repeat, nothing! They said *you* in talking to one another, the same as you and I do; each one spent the night

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

in his proper place; not a wicked look, not an ugly word. Decency at all hours. And if you would like to have Potaje come, he will tell you — ”

But Carmen interrupted him with a plaintive voice, broken by sighs.

“In my house!” she groaned with an expression of agony. “At the hacienda! And she slept in my bed! I knew all about it before and I kept still, I kept still! But this! *Josú!* This — there’s not another man in all Seville would dare do as much!”

Nacional intervened kindly.

“Be calm, Señora Carmen. Why, that was of no importance! Merely the visit of a female admirer of the *maestro’s* to the plantation, one who desired to see at close range how he lived in the country. These half foreign ladies are always capricious and queer. You ought to have seen the French women when the *cuadrilla* went to fight at Nîmes and Arles! The whole thing is nothing! the whole thing, *liquid!* Man alive! by the blue dove! I would like to see the tattler that brought such news!”

Carmen continued weeping without listening to the *banderillero’s* indignant protestations, while Señá’ Angustias, seated in an arm-chair against which her superabundant obesity rose and fell, frowned and compressed her hairy, wrinkled lips.

“Shut up, Sebastián, and don’t lie,” said the old woman. “I know it all. That trip to the hacienda was an indecent carousal, a gypsy’s revel. They even say you had Plumitas, the robber, with you.”

Here Nacional gave a start of surprise and anxiety. He imagined he saw an ill-appearing horseman with a greasy hat entering the courtyard, treading the marble

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

flags and, dismounting from his mare, pointing a carbine at him for being a babbler and a coward. Then he seemed to see cocked hats, many cocked hats of shining rubber, moustached mouths questioning, hands scribbling, and the whole *cuadrilla*, in their spangled costumes, bound elbow to elbow on the road to prison. Here truly he must make energetic denial.

"*Liquid! All liquid!* What say you about Plumitas? Everything was decent there. Man alive! Nothing was lacking but that a citizen like myself, who carries to the voting boxes more than a hundred votes from my ward, should be accused of being a friend of Plumitas!"

Señora Angustias, overcome by Nacional's protests, and a little uncertain about this last report, ceased insisting on it. Good; nothing about Plumitas! But the other thing! The trip to the hacienda with that — woman! And firm in the blindness of motherhood, which would put all the responsibility for her son's misdeeds upon his companions, she went on scolding Nacional.

"I shall tell thy wife what thou art. The poor thing killing herself in her shop from daybreak till nightfall, and thou going off on revels like a lad. Thou shouldst be ashamed. At thy years! With such a troop of children —"

The *banderillero* departed, fleeing from Señora Angustias, who in the storm of her indignation displayed the same nimble tongue as in the days when she worked in the Tobacco Factory. He resolved not to return to his master's house.

He met Gallardo on the street. The latter seemed ill-humored, but on seeing his *banderillero* he feigned smiles and animation, as if the domestic troubles made no impression upon him.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

"Things are going bad, Juaniyo. I shall never go to thy house again, even though they try to drag me there. Thy mother insults me as though I were a gypsy of Triana. Thy wife weeps and looks at me, as though it was all my fault. Man, do me the favor to not remember me again. Take another associate when thou goest with women."

Gallardo smiled amiably. That was nothing. That would soon pass. He had faced worse trials.

"What thou must do is to keep on coming. With many people there is no riot."

"I?" exclaimed Nacional. "To a priest's house first!"

The *matador* knew it was useless to insist after that. He spent most of the day out of the house, away from the women's silent and tearful reproaches, and when he returned it was with an escort, shielding himself by his manager and other friends.

One day Carmen sent for the *banderillero* to come to see her. She received Nacional in her husband's office, where they could be alone, instead of in the busy courtyard or the dining-room. Gallardo was at his club on Sierpes Street. He fled from the house, and to avoid meeting his wife, he dined outside many days, going with companions to the Eritaña inn.

Nacional seated himself on a divan, his head bowed and his hat in his hands, not wishing to look at his master's wife. How she had failed! Her eyes were red and encircled by deep, dark hollows. \ Her cheeks were sallow and the end of her nose shone with a rosy color that told of much rubbing with the handkerchief.

"Sebastián, you must tell me the whole truth. You are good, you are Juan's best friend. Never mind what

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

Mamita said the other day. You know how good she is. She speaks her mind hastily, and then it is all over."

The *banderillero* assented with a nod while awaiting her question. What did the Señora Carmen wish to know?

"Tell me what happened at La Rincona', what you saw, and what you think."

Ah! good Nacional! With what noble pride he held his head high, happy to be able to do good and to comfort the forlorn soul. See? He had seen nothing wrong!

"I swear it by my father, I swear it — by my ideas."

And without fear he took his oath on the most holy testimony of his ideas, for in reality he had seen nothing and not seeing it, he logically thought, in the pride of his perspicacity and wisdom, that nothing wrong could have happened.

"I think they are no more than friends — now — if there has been anything between them before — I don't know. The people say — they talk — they invent so many lies! Pay no attention, Señora Carmen. To be happy and to be alive, that is reality!"

She insisted again. But what had happened at the hacienda? The hacienda was her home, and it angered her to see, in addition to infidelity, something that seemed a sacrilege, a direct insult to her person.

"Do you think I am a fool, Sebastián? I have seen everything since he first began to notice that lady, or whatever she may be; I even knew Juan's thoughts. The day he dedicated a bull to her and brought home that diamond ring I guessed what was between the two and I felt like grabbing the ring and stamping on it. From that time I have known everything, everything! There are always people who take it upon themselves to carry tales

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

because they can hurt one. And besides, they have n't been cautious, they have gone everywhere together, just like gypsies that travel from fair to fair. When I was at the plantation I heard about all that Juan was doing and afterward at Sanlúcar, too."

Nacional thought it necessary to interrupt, seeing that Carmen was moved by these memories and was beginning to cry.

"And do you believe lies, child? Don't you see they are the inventions of people that want to hurt him? Envy, nothing more."

"No; I know Juan. Do you think this is the first one? He is what he is. And he can't be different. Cursed trade, that seems to turn men mad! After we had been married only two years he had a love affair with a girl from the market, a butcher girl. What I suffered when I found it out! But I never said a word. He still thinks I don't know it. After that, how many he has had! Girls that dance on the stage in *cafés*, women of the street, and even lost creatures that live in public houses. I don't know how many there have been — dozens! And I was silent, because I wished to keep peace in my home. But this woman he has now is not like the others. Juan is crazy for her; he is foolish; I know he has done thousands of humiliating things so that she, recollecting that she is a lady of high birth, will not throw him out into the street in sudden shame from having relations with a bull-fighter. She has gone now. Did n't you know it? I found out she had gone because she is bored in Seville. She left without saying good-bye to Juan, and when he went to see her the other day, he found the door closed. And there he is, sad as a sick horse; he goes

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

around among his friends with a funereal face and drinks to cheer himself up; and when he comes home he acts as if he had had a beating. No; he can't forget that woman. The *señor* was proud of having a woman of that class care for him and his pride is hurt at being left. Ah, how disgusted I am with him! He is no longer my husband. He seems to me a different person. We hardly ever speak to one another — just as if we were strangers, except when quarrelling. I am alone upstairs and he sleeps downstairs in a room off the courtyard. We shall never be united again, I swear it! Long ago I could overlook everything; they were bad habits belonging to the profession; the bull-fighters' mania. They believe themselves irresistible to women—but now I don't want to see him any more; he has become repugnant to me."

She spoke with energy, her eyes shining with the glow of hatred.

"Ah, that woman! How she has changed him! He is another man! He only cares to go with rich young fellows, and now the people of our ward and all the poor in Seville who were his friends, and helped him in the beginning, complain of him and some fine day they will raise a riot in the plaza because he is ungrateful. Money comes in here by the basketful, and it isn't easy to count it. Not even he himself ever knows what he has, but I see it all. He gambles a great deal to make his new friends like him, he loses much; the money comes in one door and goes out the other. I say nothing to him. It is he that earns it. But he has had to ask a loan from Don José for things needed at the hacienda and some olive orchards he bought this year to add to the property were purchased with other people's money. Nearly ev-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

everything he earns during the coming season will go to pay debts.

"And if he should have an accident, and have to retire as others do!

"He has even wanted to change me, just as he is changed. The *señor* shows, when he comes home after visiting his Doña Sol, or Doña Devil, that his *mamita* and I seem to him very out of date in our shawls and our loose gowns such as are worn by all the daughters of the land. He it is who has made me wear those hats brought from Madrid in which I look so hideous, just like one of those monkeys that dance to the hand-organs. The *mantilla* is so rich! And he has bought that hell-wagon, that automobile, that I am always afraid to ride in and which smells to heaven. If we would let him he would even put a hat with rooster's tails on poor *Mamita*. He is a vain fellow who thinks only of that other woman and wants to make us like her so that he won't be ashamed of us."

The *banderillero* broke forth in protests. Not so! Juan was good-hearted and he did all this because he loved his family and wanted them to have luxuries.

"What you say about Juaniyo may be true, Señá' Carmen, but he must be forgiven some things. Come! How many there are who die with envy at sight of you! Is it nothing to be the wife of the bravest of all the bull-fighters, with handfuls of money and a marvel of a house, of which you are absolute mistress? — for the master gives you charge of everything!"

Carmen's eyes grew moist and she raised her handkerchief to her eyes.

"I would rather be a shoe-maker's wife! How often

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

I have thought it! If only Juan had followed his trade instead of catching this bull-fighting mania! I would be happier in a poor shawl going to carry him his dinner in the *portal* where he worked as did his father. There would n't be any smart girls to take him away from me; he would be mine; we might know want, but on Sundays, dressed in our best, we would go to dine at an inn. Besides, the agonies of fear those accursed bulls cause me! This is not living. Plenty of money, plenty! But believe me, Sebastián, it is like poison to me, and the more that comes into the house the more my blood chills. What are hats and all this luxury to me? People think I am happy and they envy me, while my eyes follow the poor women that have less, but who carry their babies in their arms and when they are in trouble forget it in looking into the child's eyes and laughing with it. Ah, children! I know how great is my misfortune. If only we had children! If Juan could see a child in the house that was his own, all his own, something nearer than his little nephews!"

Carmen poured forth a continuous flow of tears that escaped through the folds of her handkerchief and bathed her reddened cheeks. It was the sorrow of the childless woman, ever envying the happy fate of mothers; the desperation of the wife who, on seeing her husband growing distant to her, pretends to think it due to divers causes, but in the depths of her soul attributes the misfortune to her barrenness. Ah! for a son to unite them! And Carmen, convinced by the passing years of the futility of this desire, was in despair and gazed enviously at her silent listener, to whom Nature had prodigally given that for which she longed in vain.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

The *banderillero* departed from this interview with his head bent low and went in search of the *maestro*, meeting him at the door of the Forty-five.

"Juan, I have seen thy wife. The affair grows worse and worse. Try to make up with her, to straighten things out."

"Damn it! May sickness end her, thee, and me! This is not living. God permit that Sunday a bull may catch me and so it will all be ended! What is life worth!"

He was partially drunk. He was desperate over the sullen frown he met in his house and still more (though he confessed it to none), over the flight of Doña Sol without leaving a word for him, not even a paper with four lines of farewell. They had put him out of the door; had treated him worse than if he had been a servant. He did not even know where the woman was. The Marquis had interested himself but little in his niece's journey. The maddest girl! She had not told him, either, about her going, but not on that account would he think her lost in the world. She would soon give signs of existence from some strange country where her caprices had carried her.

Gallardo did not conceal his desperation in his own house. At the silence of his wife, who kept her eyes lowered, or looked at him frowning and refusing to converse, the *matador* burst forth into deadly curses.

"Damn my fate! I hope a Miura will hook me Sunday and shake me like a bell, and that they will bring me home on a stretcher!"

"Don't say that, *malaje!*" wailed Señora Angustias. "Don't tempt God. See if that don't bring bad luck."

But the brother-in-law intervened with his sententious

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

air, taking advantage of the opportunity to flatter the swordsman.

“Never mind, *Mamita*. There isn’t a bull alive that can touch him!”

Sunday was the last bull-fight of the year in which Gallardo was to work. He spent the morning without the vague fears and superstitious preoccupations of other occasions. He dressed himself joyfully, with a nervous excitement that seemed to augment the vigor of his arms and legs. What joy that he would be able to rush out upon the yellow sand and astound twelve thousand spectators by his gallantry and daring! His art was the only reality — something which awakened the enthusiasm of the multitudes and brought in money without measure. All the rest, family and love, but served to complicate existence and cause unhappiness. Ah! What sword-thrusts he was going to make! He felt the strength of a giant within himself. He was a different man, he had neither fear nor dread. He even showed impatience that it was not yet the hour for going to the plaza, contrary to other times when he had put off the dreaded moment. His fury at his domestic unhappiness and at that flight which wounded his vanity, made him long to throw himself upon the bulls.

When the carriage arrived, Gallardo crossed the courtyard, on this occasion, paying no attention to the women’s emotion. Carmen did not appear. Bah! Women! They only serve to embitter life. Only in men did one find lasting affection and joyful companionship. There was his brother-in-law admiring himself before going to the plaza, happy in a street suit of the master’s which had been made over to his measure even before the

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

owner had worn it. In spite of being a ridiculous charlatan he was worth more than all the rest of the family. He never abandoned him.

"Thou art finer than Roger de Flor himself," Gallardo told him gayly. "Get into the coach—and I'll take thee to the plaza."

His brother-in-law seated himself near the great man, trembling with pride as he rode along the streets of Seville, that all should see him seated among the silken capes and the heavy gold embroideries of the bull-fighters.

The plaza was full. This important *corrida* at the end of autumn had attracted a great audience, not only from the city but from the country as well. Upon the "bleachers" in the sun were seated many people from the surrounding country towns.

From the first instant Gallardo showed the nervous activity that possessed him. He was to be seen far from the *barrera* advancing to meet the bull, distracting him with his cape-work, while the *picadores* awaited the moment in which the bull would attack their miserable horses.

A certain antagonism of the public against the bull-fighter could be felt. They applauded him as usual, but the demonstrations of enthusiasm were more hearty and warm on the shady side than on the rows of seats in the sun, where many sat in their shirt-sleeves in the burning rays.

Gallardo divined the danger, foresaw that he would have bad luck, and that half the ring would rise shouting against him, denouncing him as thankless and ungrateful to those who had elevated him.

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

He killed his first bull with middling luck. He threw himself as bravely as ever between the horns, but the sword struck bone. His admirers applauded him. The thrust was well aimed and he was not to be blamed for the futility of his effort. But the second time he went in to kill, the bull, on chasing after the *muleta*, shook the blade out of the wound, sending it flying away. Then, taking a new sword from Garabato's hands, he turned toward the wild beast, which awaited him, with forefeet planted forward, his neck streaming blood and his dripping mouth almost touching the sand. The *maestro* holding his *muleta* before the bull's eyes was tranquilly laying back with the point of his sword the shafts of the *banderillas* that hung over his head. He was going to kill him by a stab in the spinal cord. He placed the steel point on the top of the bull's head, searching between the horns for the sensitive spot. With an effort he thrust in the sword and the animal shuddered painfully, but still kept his feet, resisting the steel with a violent tossing of his head.

"One!" clamored the audience on the bleachers in mocking tones.

"Damn it!" Why did those people attack him with such injustice?

He raised the sword again and thrust, managing this time to reach the vulnerable spot. The bull fell instantly, as if struck by a lightning flash in the very nerve-centre of his life, and he lay with his horns dug into the ground, his legs rigid in the air.

The people in the shade applauded with class enthusiasm, while the audience in the sun broke into hisses and jibes.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

“*Nino litri!* Aristocrat!”

Gallardo turned his back to these protests and saluted the enthusiasts with his *muleta* and sword. The insults of the populace which had always been friendly to him hurt him and caused him to clench his fists.

“But what do those people want? The bull gave no better account of himself. Damn it! This is the work of enemies.”

He passed a great part of the *corrida* close to the *barrera* gazing disdainfully at what his companions were doing, accusing them mentally of having prepared these marks of displeasure against him in advance.

He also broke into curses against the bull and the herder that raised him. He had come so well prepared to do great deeds and he had encountered a beast which would not permit him to shine! The breeders that turned out such animals ought to be shot.

When he again took up the instruments of death, he ordered Nacional and another of his *peones* to draw the bull with the cape toward the part of the plaza where the populace was seated.

He knew the public. He must humor the citizens in the sun, those tumultuous and terrible demagogues who carried class hatred into the plaza but easily changed hisses into applause when a slight show of consideration flattered their pride.

The *peones*, waving their capes at the bull, began a race to attract him to the sunny side of the ring. A movement of joyful surprise from the populace welcomed this manœuvre. The supreme moment, the bull's death, was to take place before their eyes — and not, as almost always happened, at a great distance for the convenience of the rich who were seated in the shade.

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

The fierce beast, as he stood alone on that side of the plaza, began to attack the dead body of a horse. He thrust his head into the open belly and raised the miserable carcass on his horns like a limp rag. It fell to the ground, lying almost doubled, and the bull backed away with indecisive step. He returned again to sniff it with deep bellowings, while the audience laughed at his stupid tenacity, at this search for life in the inanimate body.

"Jam him hard there! Thou hast lots of strength, boy! Keep it up, or he'll turn on thee!"

But every one's attention was withdrawn from this venting of the bull's fury to Gallardo who was crossing the plaza with a short swinging step, in one hand the rolled *muleta*, in the other flourishing his sword as though it were a cane.

The entire audience in the sun applauded, grateful to have the swordsman come over to them.

"Thou hast put them into thy pocket," said Nacional, who stood near the bull with the cape ready.

The multitude gesticulated, calling to the bull-fighter — "Here, here!"

Each one wished him to kill the bull before his seat that he might not lose the slightest detail, and the swordsman hesitated between the contradictory calls of thousands of mouths. With one foot on the vaulting wall of the barrier he calculated where best to end the bull. He must be drawn farther away. The dead horse seemed to fill that whole side of the plaza and disturbed the bull-fighter.

He was about to order Nacional to attract the beast away, when he heard a familiar voice behind him, a voice he did not recognize but which caused him to turn quickly.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

“Good-afternoon, Señor Juan. We are going to applaud reality!”

He saw in the first row, under the panel of the inner barrier, a folded jacket on the edge of the wall, a pair of arms in shirt sleeves crossed over it, and a broad face recently shaved resting in the hands, with a hat drawn down to the ears. He looked like a good-natured rustic, come from a country town to witness the bull-fight.

Gallardo recognized him. It was Plumitas.

He had fulfilled his promise and there he was among twelve thousand people who did not know him, greeting the *matador*, who felt a certain gratitude for this display of confidence. Gallardo marvelled at his temerity. To come down to Seville, to enter the plaza, far from the hills and the deserts where defence was easy for him, without the aid of his two companions, his mare and his carbine, and all — to see him kill bulls! Of the two, that man was the brave one. He thought of his plantation which was at Plumitas' mercy, of the country life which was only possible by maintaining good relations with this extraordinary personage. The bull must be for him.

He smiled at the bandit, who continued contemplating him with placid countenance; he took off his cap and shouted, turning toward the boisterous multitude, but with his eyes on Plumitas.

“*Vaya!* In honor of you!”

He threw his cap into the bleachers and many hands were stretched out in rivalry, struggling to grasp the sacred trust. Gallardo gave signs to Nacional to bring the bull near him with his skilful cape-work. He extended his *muleta* and the beast attacked with sonorous bellow-

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

ing, passing beneath the red rag. "Olé!" roared the crowd, acknowledging its old idol again and disposed to admire all that he did.

He continued making *pases* at the bull, accompanied by the exclamations of the people a few feet away. Seeing him near they gave him advice. "Take care, Gallardo!" The bull was perfectly sound. He must not let himself get between him and the barrier. He must keep his retreat clear.

Others more enthusiastic excited him to deeds of daring with audacious counsel.

"Let him have one of thy best! *Zas!* A sword-thrust and thou hast him in thy pocket!"

The animal was too big and too cautious to be put in the pocket. He was excited by the proximity of the dead horse, and kept returning to it as if the odor intoxicated him.

In one of his evolutions, the bull, tired by the *muleta*, stood motionless. Gallardo had the dead horse behind him. It was a bad situation, but out of worse he had come victorious. He wished to take advantage of the horse's position. The public excited him to it. Among the men on the bleachers who had risen to their feet, and were leaning forward to lose no detail of the decisive moment, he recognized many popular devotees who had begun to cool toward him but were now applauding him again, moved by consideration for the populace.

"Score a point, there! Good boy! Now we'll see the real thing! Strike true!"

Gallardo turned his head slightly to salute Plumitas, who sat smiling, his moon face peeping above his arms and the jacket.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

“For you, comrade!”

He squared himself with the sword presented ready to kill—but at that instant the earth seemed to shake and he felt himself hurled to a great distance; then the plaza fell, everything turned black, and a fierce hurricane of voices seemed to blow in from off the sea. His body vibrated painfully, his head buzzed as if it would burst; a mortal anguish contracted his breast—and he fell into a dark and limitless void, as into the unconsciousness of death.

The bull, at the very instant in which Gallardo made ready to thrust, had suddenly thrown himself upon him, attracted by the horse behind him. It was a brutal encounter, in which the body of the bull-fighter with its silk and gold trappings rolled away and disappeared beneath his feet. He did not gore him with his horns, but the blow was horrible, staggering. With head and horns the wild beast felled the man as though he had been struck by a sledge hammer.

The bull, which saw only the horse, felt an obstacle near his feet, and scorning the dead body, turned to attack again the brilliant puppet that lay motionless on the sand. He raised it with one horn, tossed it some feet away after giving it a brief shaking, and then started to return to a third attack.

The multitude, stupefied by the swiftness with which all this had occurred, remained silent, appalled. The bull was going to kill him! Perhaps he had already done so! Suddenly a shriek from the entire audience broke this agonizing silence. A cape was held between the wild beast and his victim, a rag almost thrust over its head by vigorous arms which tried to blind the brute. It was Na-

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

cional, who, in desperation, threw himself upon the bull, willing to be caught by him to save his master. The beast, stupefied by this new obstacle, charged against it, turning tail to the man lying on the sand. The *banderillero*, in between the horns, ran backward, waving the cape, not knowing how to free himself from this perilous situation, but happy to see that he was drawing the bull away from the wounded man.

The audience almost forgot the swordsman, so impressed was it by this new incident. Nacional was going to fall also; he could not get out from between the horns; the wild beast already had him almost hooked. Men shouted as if their cries could aid him; women wailed with anguish, turning away their faces and clutching one another convulsively, until the *banderillero*, taking advantage of the moment in which the wild beast lowered his head to charge, rushed from between the horns, stepping to one side, while the animal ran on blindly, the torn cape hanging before his eyes.

Then there broke forth deafening applause. The fickle multitude, impressed only by the danger of the moment, applauded Nacional. It was one of the happiest moments of his life. The audience, taken up with him, scarcely noticed Gallardo's inanimate body as it was carried out of the ring, the head hanging limp, by bull-fighters and employees of the plaza.

At nightfall the only subject of conversation in the city was Gallardo's injury, the most terrible of his life. Extras were being published in many cities and newspapers all over Spain gave accounts of the events with lengthy comment. The telegraph worked as if a political personage had just been the victim of an assassin.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Terrifying news circulated along Sierpes Street exaggerated by Southern hyperbolic commentary. Poor Gallardo had just died. He who gave the sad news had seen him in a bed in the infirmary of the plaza, white as paper, a cross in his hands. Another presented himself with less lugubrious news. He was not dead yet, but he would die any moment.

"He has lost everything! Everything! Disembowelled! The brute has left the poor fellow punctured like a sieve."

Guards had been placed at the entrances to the plaza so that the people, anxious for news, should not invade the infirmary. The multitude surged outside the ring asking news of the master's condition from those who came and went.

Nacional, still dressed in his fighting costume, peered out several times, ill-humored and frowning, blustering and angry, because arrangements for moving the *maestro* to his house had not been made. The people seeing the *banderillero* forgot the injured man and congratulated him.

"Señor Sebastián, you have done very well. If it had n't been for you — !"

But what mattered it to him what he had done? All — *liquid*. The only thing of importance was poor Juan who lay in the infirmary fighting death.

"And how is he, Señor Sebastián?"

"Very bad. He has just regained his senses. He has one leg ground to dust; a horn-stab under the arm; and what more I know not! The poor boy is as dear to me as my patron-saint. We are going to carry him home."

When night fell Gallardo was taken from the ring on

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

a stretcher. The multitude marched silently after him. The journey was long. Every moment Nacional, who walked with his cape hanging over his arm, mingling in his glittering bull-fighter's dress with the vulgar crowd, bent over the rubber cover of the litter and ordered the bearers to halt.

The doctors from the plaza walked behind and with them the Marquis of Moraima and Don José, who seemed ready to faint and fall into the arms of companions from the Forty-five, who were all jumbled together and mixed in with the ragged mob that followed the bull-fighter.

The crowd was in a state of consternation. It was a gloomy procession, as if one of those national disasters that overcome differences of class and level all men by general misfortune had taken place.

"What a calamity, Señor Marqués," said a chubby-cheeked, blonde rustic, his jacket hanging over one shoulder.

Twice he had rudely shoved away one of the stretcher bearers in his desire to help carry it. The Marquis looked at him sympathetically. He must be one of those country men who were accustomed to greet him on the high-road.

"Yes; a great calamity, boy."

"Do you think he will die, Señor Marqués?"

"They fear so — unless a miracle saves him. He is ground to dust."

The Marquis, laying his right hand on the stranger's shoulder, seemed to be grateful for the sadness reflected in his countenance.

The arrival at Gallardo's house was painful. Cries of

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

despair arose in the courtyard. On the street, the women, neighbors, and friends of the family, screamed and tore their hair, believing Juan already dead. Potaje and some comrades were obliged to stand in the doorway scattering blows and cuffs so that the multitude following the stretcher should not besiege the house. The street was filled with a crowd that surged about commenting on the event. All stared at the house anxious to divine something through the walls.

The stretcher was carried into a room off the courtyard and the *matador* was moved to a bed with great care. He was enwrapped in cloths and blood-stained bandages that smelled of strong antiseptics. A pink stocking was all that remained of his fighting costume. His underclothing was torn in some places and cut by scissors in others.

His *coleta* hung about his neck disordered and tangled; his face had the pallor of death. He opened his eyes as he felt a hand pressed into one of his and smiled slightly on seeing Carmen, a Carmen as white as himself, with dry eyes, livid lips, and an expression of dread, as if this were her husband's last moment.

Gallardo's grave gentlemen friends prudently intervened. That could not continue; Carmen must retire. As yet, only preliminary treatment had been given the wound, and there was still much work for the doctors, so the wife was taken out of the room. The wounded man made a sign with his eyes to Nacional, who bent over him straining to catch his faint whisper.

"Juan says," he murmured, going out into the courtyard, "to telegraph to Doctor Ruiz."

The manager answered, happy at his foresight that

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

he had done so in the middle of the afternoon, as soon as he became convinced of the seriousness of the calamity. He was sure the doctor must already be on the way and would arrive the next morning.

After this, Don José continued questioning the doctors who had treated him in the plaza. Their first, perturbation over, they grew more optimistic. It was possible he might not die. His constitution was so strong! The greatest thing to fear was the shock he had suffered, the shaking which was enough to kill another instantly; but he had already come out of the first collapse and had recovered his senses, although his weakness was great. As for the wounds, they did not consider them dangerous. That on the arm was a slight thing; perhaps it would be less agile than before. As for the leg, there was less hope. The bone was fractured; Gallardo might be left lame.

Don José, who had made every effort to be impassive when, hours before, the swordsman's death was considered inevitable, shuddered on hearing this. His *matador* lame? Then he could never again fight bulls! He was indignant at the calmness with which the doctors talked of the possibility of Gallardo's being left useless for bull-fighting.

"That cannot be. Do you think it logical that Juan will live and not fight bulls? Who would take his place? It cannot be, I say! The greatest man in the world, and they want him to retire!"

He spent the night watching with the men of the *cua-drilla* and Gallardo's brother-in-law. The next morning he rushed to the station. The express from Madrid arrived and on it Doctor Ruiz. He came without baggage,

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

dressed with his usual carelessness, smiling beneath his yellowish white beard, his big abdomen shaking like a Buddha, in his loose waistcoat, with the movements of his short legs. He had received the news in Madrid as he was coming away from a fight of young bullocks arranged to introduce a certain boy from Las Ventas. It was a clownish exhibition which had greatly amused him and he laughed after a night of weariness in the train, remembering this grotesque *corrida*, as if he had forgotten the object of his journey.

As he entered the sick room the bull-fighter, who seemed overcome with weakness, opened his eyes and recognized him, and his face lighted with a smile of confidence. Ruiz, after listening in a corner to the whispers of the doctors who had given first aid, approached the invalid with a resolute air.

"Courage, my good fellow, thou art not going to die of this! Thou hast ever such rare luck!"

And then he added, turning to his colleagues: "But what a magnificent animal this Juanillo is! Any other, by this time, would not have left us anything to do."

He examined him with care. A bad horn-wound; but he had seen many worse! In cases of sickness that he called *ordinary*, he vacillated undecided, not venturing to express an opinion. But the goring of a bull was his speciality and he always expected the most remarkable recoveries, as if the horns gave the wound and the remedy at once.

"The man that does n't die in the ring itself," he said, "can almost say he is saved. The cure is just a question of time."

For three days Gallardo was subjected to atrocious

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

operations and groaned with pain, for his weak state did not permit of the use of anæsthetics. Doctor Ruiz extracted various splinters from one leg, fragments of the fractured shin-bone.

"Who said thou wouldst be left useless for fighting?" exclaimed the doctor, happy in his skill. "Thou wilt fight bulls again, son; the public will still be obliged to applaud thee much."

The manager assented to these words. He had thought the same. Could that youth, who was the greatest man in the world, die thus?

By Doctor Ruiz' order, the bull-fighter's family had moved to Don José's house. The women bothered him; their proximity was intolerable during operating hours. A moan from the bull-fighter was enough to awaken instant response from all parts of the house; the mother's and sister's screams were like painful echoes. Carmen had to be held by force, and she fought like a mad woman in her desire to go to her husband's side.

Grief had changed the wife, making her forget her animosity. Often her tears were caused by remorse, for she believed herself the unconscious author of the calamity.

"The fault is mine; I know it," she said in despair to Nacional. "He said over and over again he wished a bull would gore him to finish it all! I have been very wicked. I have embittered his life."

In vain the *banderillero* recounted the event in all its details to convince her that the calamity had been accidental. No; Gallardo, according to her, had wanted to end his life, and had it not been for the *banderillero*, he would have been carried out of the ring dead.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

When the operations were over, the family returned to the house. Carmen entered the wounded man's room with a light step and lowered eyes, as if ashamed of her former hostility.

"How art thou?" she asked, clasping one of Juan's hands between both her own. She remained thus, silent and timid in the presence of Dr. Ruiz and other friends who stayed by the sick man's bedside. Had she been left alone perhaps she would have knelt beside her husband asking his forgiveness. Poor fellow! She had made him desperate by her cruelty, sending him to his death. She wished to forget it all. And her simple soul looked out of her eyes with self-abnegation, her humility mingled with wifely love and tenderness.

Gallardo seemed to have grown smaller with so much suffering; he was thin, pale, and shrunken. Nothing was left of the arrogant youth who fired the public with his daring. He complained of his inactivity and of his useless leg, heavy as lead. The terrible operations he had undergone in full consciousness seemed to have made him a coward. His fortitude in bearing pain had disappeared and he groaned at the slightest molestation.

His room was like a place of reunion through which the most celebrated connoisseurs of the city passed. The smoke of their cigars was mingled with the stench of iodoform and strong liniments. Bottles of wine that had been presented by the callers stood on the tables among medicine flasks and packages of cotton and bandages.

"That is nothing," shouted his friends, wishing to encourage the bull-fighter with their noisy optimism. "Inside of a couple of months thou wilt be fighting bulls

A LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH

again. Thou hast fallen into good hands. Doctor Ruiz works miracles.”

The doctor was equally encouraging.

“We have a man on our hands again. Look at him; he is smoking. And a sick man that smokes —”

CHAPTER XI

DOCTOR RUIZ ON TAUROMACHY

FAR into the night the doctor, the manager, and members of the *cuadrilla* kept the wounded man company. When Potaje came he sat near the table trying to keep the bottles within reach of his hand. The conversation between Ruiz, the manager, and Nacional was always about bulls. It was impossible to be with Don José and talk of anything else. They commented on all bull-fighters' defects, discussed their merits and the money they earned, while the convalescent listened in forced inactivity or fell into a drowsy torpor stupefied by the murmur of conversation.

Generally the doctor was the only one who talked, followed in his pompous argument by Nacional's grave and admiring eyes. "Bull-fighting is an evolution," said he. "Dost thou understand, Sebastián? A development from the customs of our country, a modification of the popular diversions which Spaniards of olden times were given to; those times of which Don Joselito must often have talked of to thee."

Dr. Ruiz, with a glass in one hand, talked and talked, only stopping to take a sip.

The idea that bull-fighting as we know it is an ancient sport is nothing but a tremendous lie. They killed wild beasts in Spain for the diversion of the people but bull-fighting did not then exist as it is known to-day. The

DOCTOR RUIZ ON TAUROMACHY

Cid speared bulls skilfully and Christian and Moorish gentlemen diverted themselves in the bull-ring, but bull-fighting as a profession did not exist nor did they send the animals to a noble death according to rules.

The doctor related the history of the national sport for centuries past. Only on rare occasions, when kings married, when a treaty of peace was signed, or a chapel in a cathedral was dedicated, were such events as bull-fights celebrated. There was no regularity in the repetition of these feasts, nor were there any professional fighters. Titled gentlemen dressed in costumes of silks went into the bull-ring mounted on their chargers to spear the beast, or to fight it with lances before the eyes of the ladies. If the bull managed to throw them off their horses they drew their swords, and with the assistance of their lackeys put it to death, wounding it wherever they could, without conforming to any rules. When the *corrida* was for the people the multitude descended into the arena, attacking the bull *en masse* until they succeeded in routing it, killing it by dagger thrusts.

"Bull-fights did not exist," continued the doctor. "That was hunting wild cattle. In fact, the people had other occupations, and reckoned on other sports peculiar to their epoch, and did not need to perfect this diversion."

The warlike Spaniard had a sure means of making his career in his incessant wars in divers parts of Europe, and the exploration of the Americas always called for valiant men. Moreover, religion afforded frequent emotional spectacles, full of the thrill provided by the sight of suffering in others by which indulgences for the soul could be obtained. The sentences pronounced by the

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Inquisition and the burning of human beings at the stake were spectacles that took away interest in games with mere wild animals. The Inquisition became the great national festival.

“But there came a day,” continued Doctor Ruiz with a fine smile, “in which the Inquisition began to lose ground. Everything comes to an end in this world. It finally died of old age, long before the reform statutes suppressed it. It wore itself out; the world had changed and such diversions became something like what a bull-fight in Norway would be among the snows and beneath the gloomy sky. They lacked atmosphere. They began to be ashamed of burning men, with all the pomp of sermons, ridiculous vestures, and recantations. They no longer dared pass Inquisition sentences. When it was necessary to show that it still existed they contented themselves with beatings given behind closed doors. At the same time we Spaniards, weary of roving over the world in search of adventure, began to stay at home. There were no longer wars in Flanders or in Italy; the conquest of America, with its continual embarkation of adventurers, terminated, and then it was that the art of bull-fighting began, that permanent plazas were constructed and *cuadrillas* of professional bull-fighters were formed; the game was adjusted to rules, and the feats of *banderillas* and of killing, as we know them to-day, were recognized. The multitude found the sport much to its liking. Bull-fighting became democratic when it was converted into a profession. Gentlemen were substituted by plebians who demanded pay for exposing their lives, and the people flocked to the bull-rings of their own free will, and dared to insult from their seats in the

DOCTOR RUIZ ON TAUROMACHY

plaza the very authority which inspired their terror in the streets. The sons of those who had frequented with religious and intense enthusiasm the burning of heretics and the baiting of Jews gave themselves up to witnessing, with noisy shouts, the struggle between the man and the bull, in which only occasionally death comes to the man. Is this not progress?"

Ruiz insisted on his idea. In the middle of the eighteenth century when Spain retired within herself, renouncing distant wars and new colonizations, and when religious cruelty languished for lack of atmosphere, then was the time when bull-fighting flourished forth. Popular heroism needed new heights to scale for notoriety and fortune. The ferocity of the multitude, accustomed to orgies of death, needed a safety valve to give expansion to its soul, educated for centuries to the contemplation of torture. The Order of the Inquisition was replaced by the bull-fight. He who a century before would have been a soldier in Flanders, or a military colonizer in the solitudes of the New World, became a bull-fighter. The people, finding their avenues of expansion closed, saw in the new national sport a glorious opening for all the ambitious ones who had valor and courage.

"It was progress!" continued the doctor. "That seems clear to me. So I, who am revolutionary in everything, am not ashamed to say I like the bulls. Man needs a spice of wickedness to enliven the monotony of existence. Alcohol is bad also and we know it does us harm, but nearly all of us drink it. A little savagery now and then gives one new energy to go on living. We all like to take a look into the past once in a while and live the life of our remote ancestors. Brutality renews those

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

mysterious inner forces that it is not well to let die. You say bull-fights are barbarous? So they are; but they are not the only barbarous sport in the world. The turning to violent and savage joys is a human ailment that all people suffer equally. For that reason I am indignant when I see foreigners turn contemptuous eyes on Spain, as if such things only existed here."

And the doctor railed against horse-races, in which many more men are killed than in bull-fights; against fox hunting with trained dogs, witnessed by civilized spectators; against many modern games out of which the champions come with broken legs, fractured skulls, or flattened noses; against the duel, fought in the majority of cases without other cause than an unhealthy desire for publicity.

"The bull and the horse," railed Ruiz, "bring to tears the very people that don't raise the slightest outcry in their own countries when they see a racing animal fall in the hippodrome, ruptured, or with broken legs, the very people who think the establishment of a zoölogical garden the complement to the beauty of every great city."

Doctor Ruiz was indignant because, in the name of civilization, bull-fights were anathematized as barbarous and sanguinary, while in the name of the same civilization the most useless as well as harmful animals on earth were lodged and fed and warmed in princely luxury. Why is that? Science knows them perfectly and has them catalogued. If their extermination is objected to, one must still protest against the dark tragedies that take place every day in the cages in the zoölogical parks, the goat bleating piteously as he is thrust defenceless

DOCTOR RUIZ ON TAUROMACHY

into the panther's den, to be crushed to death by the wild beast burying his claws in the victim's entrails, and his chops in his steaming blood; timid rabbits, torn from the mountain's fragrant peace, trembling at the breath of the boa which hypnotizes them with its eyes and winds the coils of its grotesque rings about them. Hundreds of poor animals which should be protected because of their weakness die to sustain absolutely useless ferocious wild beasts that are kept and feasted in cities which boast of belonging to the higher civilization; and from these same cities insults are hurled against Spanish cruelty, because brave and expert men, following rules of undisputed wisdom, kill a proud and fearful wild beast face to face, in broad day, beneath the blue heavens, in the presence of a noisy, gay-colored multitude, adding the charm of picturesque beauty to the emotion of danger. *Vive Dios!*

"They insult us because we have become weak," said Ruiz, waxing indignant over what he considered universal injustice. "Our world is like a monkey that imitates the gestures and joys of the one he respects as a master. Just now England leads, and both hemispheres approve horse-racing; crowds stupidly gather to watch lank nags run around a race-track, a spectacle that could not be surpassed in insipidity. If in the days of Spain's supremacy bull-fighting had been as popular as to-day, there would now be bull-rings in many European countries. Don't talk to me about the superior foreigners! I admire them because they have made revolutions, and we owe much of our thought to them; but regarding bulls, heavens, man, they talk nothing but nonsense!"

And the vehement doctor, with the blindness of fanati-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

cism, condemned in his execration everybody on the planet who abominated the Spanish sport while at the same time they upheld other sanguinary diversions which cannot even justify themselves with the pretext of beauty.

After a stay of ten days in Seville the doctor had to return to Madrid.

"Well, young fellow," he said to the sick man, "thou dost not need me now and I have a great deal to do. Don't be imprudent. After two months thou wilt be well and strong. It is possible thou mayest be a little stiff in the leg, but thou hast a constitution of iron and thou wilt mend."

Gallardo's recovery took place within the time set by Ruiz. When at the end of a month his leg was freed from its enforced quiet, the bull-fighter, weak and limping slightly, could go out and sit in an arm-chair in the courtyard, where he received his friends.

During his illness, when the fever was high and he was lost in delirium, one thought, ever the same, held firm in the midst of his imaginative wanderings. Doña Sol — did that woman know of his misfortune?

While he was still in bed he ventured to ask his manager about her one day when they were alone.

"Yes, man," said Don José, "she has thought of thee. She sent me a telegram from Nice, asking about thy health three days after the accident. Doubtless she heard of it through the newspapers. They have talked about thee everywhere, as if thou wert a king."

The manager had answered the telegram but had heard nothing from her since.

Gallardo was satisfied with this news for some days

DOCTOR RUIZ ON TAUROMACHY

but then he began to ask again, with the insistence of a sick man who thinks the whole world interested in the state of his health. Had she not written? Had she not asked for more news of him? The manager tried to excuse Doña Sol's silence and thus console his *matador*. He must remember that the lady was always travelling. How could any one know where she might be at that moment?

But the bull-fighter's sorrow at thinking himself forgotten obliged Don José to lie out of pity. Days before he had received a short note from Italy in which Doña Sol asked for news of the wounded man.

"Let me see it," said Gallardo eagerly.

When he pretended to have forgotten it at home, Gallardo implored him, "Bring it to me. I so long to see her writing, to convince myself that she remembers me."

To avoid new complications, Don José invented a correspondence which never reached his hands because it was directed to some one else. Doña Sol wrote, according to him, to the marquis in regard to business connected with her fortune, and at the end of every letter she asked about Gallardo's health. Again, the letters were to a cousin of hers and in them was the same thought of the bull-fighter.

Gallardo heard this news joyfully but at the same time shook his head with a doubtful expression. When would he see her again! Would he ever see her? Ah, that erratic woman, who had flown without reason at the caprice of her strange disposition!

"What thou shouldst do," said the manager, "is to forget women and think about business a little. Thou art no longer in bed. How dost thou feel in regard to

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

strength? Tell me, shall we fight bulls or not? Thou hast the rest of the winter in which to grow strong. Shall we accept contracts to fight this year, or shall we refuse?"

Gallardo raised his head proudly, as if something dishonorable had been proposed to him. Give up bull-fighting? Pass a year without being seen in the ring? Was it possible the public could be resigned to such an absence?

"Accept, Don José. From now till spring there is time to get strong. I will fight whatever they put before me. You can make a contract for the Easter bull-fight. It seems to me this leg is going to give me a good deal of trouble, but by then, God willing, I'll be as if made of iron."

It was two months before the bull-fighter grew strong. He limped slightly and felt less agility in his arms; but he made light of these troubles as insignificant when he began to feel the power of health reanimating his vigorous body.

Finding himself alone in his wife's room (for he had returned to it when he abandoned the sick chamber), he stood before a mirror and squared himself as though facing a bull, placing one arm above the other in the form of a cross as though holding the sword and *muleta* in his hands. *Zas!* A sword-thrust at the invisible bull. To the very hilt! He smiled proudly thinking how his enemies were going to be deceived, those who prophesied his immediate decadence whenever he was gored.

It would be a long time yet before he could enter the ring. He longed for the glory of applause and the acclamation of the multitudes with the eagerness of a begin-

DOCTOR RUIZ ON TAUROMACHY

ner,—as though the recent injury had closed a past existence; as if the former Gallardo were another man while now he had to begin his career anew.

He decided to pass the rest of the winter at La Rinconada with his family, to gain strength. Hunting and long trips would improve his broken leg. Besides, he would ride on horseback overseeing the work, he would visit the flocks of goats, the herds of swine, the droves of cattle and horses pastured in the meadows. The administration of the plantation was not getting on well. Everything cost him more than other proprietors and the profits were less. It was the estate of a bull-fighter of generous habits accustomed to earning great quantities of money without knowing the restriction of economy. His travels during a part of the year, and his accident, which had brought stupefaction and disorder into his house, caused business to go awry.

Antonio, his brother-in-law, who had established himself at the plantation for a season with the airs of a dictator intending to set everything in order, had only impeded the progress of the work and provoked the ire of the laborers. Fortunately Gallardo counted on certain returns from the bull-fights, an inexhaustible source of wealth for repairing his prodigality.

Before leaving for La Rinconada Señora Angustias begged her son to go and kneel before the Virgin of Hope. It was to fulfil a promise she had made in that dismal twilight when she had seen him brought home upon a stretcher, pale and motionless as a dead man. How often had she wept before the Macarena, the beautiful Queen of Heaven with her long lashes and olive cheeks, asking her not to forget her poor Juanillo!

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

The occasion was a popular event. The gardeners of the Macarena ward were called upon by the master's mother, and the Church of San Gil was filled with flowers arranged in tall heaps like pyramids on the altars, or hanging in garlands between the arches and suspended from the lamps in great clusters.

The sacred ceremony took place one bright morning. In spite of its being a week-day the church was filled with the best families of the nearby wards; stout women with black eyes and short necks, with waists and hips outlined in coarse curves, wearing black silk gowns with lace *mantillas* over their pale faces; workmen recently shaven, in new suits, round hats, and with great gold chains on their waistcoats. Beggars came in bands as if a wedding were to be celebrated and stood at the doors of the temple in double file. The good wives of the ward, unkempt and with babies in their arms, formed groups, impatiently awaiting the arrival of Gallardo and his family.

A mass was to be sung with accompaniment of orchestra and voices, something extraordinary, like the opera in the theatre of San Fernando at Christmas time. Then the priests would sing the *Te Deum* as a thanksgiving for the recovery of Señor Juan Gallardo, just as when the king entered Seville.

The *cortège* appeared making its way through the crowd. The bull-fighter's mother and wife, with relatives and friends, walked in advance, while the heavy silk of their skirts rustled as they passed, smiling sweetly beneath their *mantillas*.

Behind came Gallardo, followed by an interminable escort of bull-fighters and friends, all dressed in light col-

DOCTOR RUIZ ON TAUROMACHY

ors, with chains and rings of amazing splendor, wearing on their heads white felt hats which contrasted with the blackness of the feminine headgear.

Gallardo was grave. He was a sincere believer. He thought little about God and blasphemed Him in difficult moments with the automatism of custom; but this was a different thing; he was going to give thanks to the Most Holy Macarena, and he entered the temple with an air of pious compunction.

All went in except Nacional, who abandoned his wife and offspring and remained outside in the churchyard.

"I am a free-thinker," he believed the time opportune to declare before a group of friends. "I respect all beliefs; but what is going on inside, for me is — *liquid!* I don't want to be lacking in respect to the Macarena, nor to rob her of her due, but, comrade, if I had not arrived in time to attract the bull away when Juaniyo was stretched on the ground — !"

The sound of the instruments was borne out to the churchyard, with the voices of the singers, a sweet, voluptuous harmony, accompanied by breaths of perfume from the flowers and the odor of wax candles.

The bull-fighters and devotees of Gallardo who were gathered outside the temple smoked cigarette after cigarette. From time to time some of them strayed off to while away the time in the nearest tavern.

When the company came forth again the poor appeared smiling and gesticulating, their hands full of coin. There was money for all. The *maestro* Gallardo was liberal.

Señora Angustias wept, with her head reclining on a friend's shoulder.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

At the door of the church the *matador*, smiling and magnificent, gave his arm to his wife, who walked tremulous with emotion and with lowered eyes, a tear quivering on her lashes.

Carmen felt as if she had just been married a second time.

CHAPTER XII

AIRING THE SAINTS

AS Holy Week drew near, Gallardo gave his mother a great joy. In former years the swordsman used to join the procession of the San Lorenzo parish as a devotee of Our Lord Jesus of the Great Power, dressed in a black tunic with a tall hood and a mask that left only his eyes visible. It was a gentleman's fraternity, and the bull-fighter, finding himself on the road to fortune, had joined it, forsaking popular brotherhoods in which devotion was accompanied by drunkenness and scandal.

Gallardo talked with pride of the seriousness of this religious association. Everything was orderly and well disciplined, as in the army. On the night of Holy Thursday, when the clock on San Lorenzo was striking the second stroke of two at break of day, the doors opened instantaneously and the whole interior of the temple, full of lights and with the fraternity in line, appeared before the eyes of the multitude which was crowded together in the darkness of the churchyard.

The black-cowled figures, silent and gloomy, with no other expression of life than the glitter of their eyes behind the dark mask, advanced two by two with slow step, keeping a wide space between pair and pair, grasping their torches of livid flame and trailing their long tunics on the floor.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

The multitude, with that impressionability inherent in Southern peoples, contemplated intently the passing of the hooded brethren whom they called Nazarenes, mysterious maskers who perhaps were great gentlemen, moved by traditional devotion to figure in this nocturnal procession which ended immediately at sunrise.

It was a silent fraternity. The Nazarenes must not speak, and they marched escorted by municipal guards who took care that the importunate should not molest them. Drunkards abounded in the multitude. There wandered through the streets tireless devotees who, in memory of the Passion of Our Lord, began on Holy Wednesday to demonstrate their piety by walking from tavern to tavern, and did not reach the last station until Saturday, in which they took final refuge after innumerable falls by the way which had been for them likewise a sort of *Via Dolorosa*.

As the members of the fraternity, sentenced to silence under heavy penalty, marched along in procession, the drunken concourse drew near and murmured in their ears the most atrocious insults against the maskers and their families, whom perhaps they did not know. The Nazarene held his peace and suffered in silence, swallowing the outrages and offering them as a sacrifice to the Lord of Great Power. But these troublesome fellows, like flies that would not be driven away, incited to further activity by this meekness, redoubled their offensive buzzing until at last some pious masker thought that, although silence was obligatory, inaction was not, and without speaking a word, raised the torch and struck a drunkard who had disturbed the sacred order of the ceremony.

AIRING THE SAINTS

During the course of the procession, when the bearers of the statues halted for rest and the heavy platforms of the images hung about with lanterns stood still, at a light hiss the hooded brethren stopped, the couples standing face to face, with the flambeau resting on one foot, gazing at the crowd through the masks with their mysterious eyes. They were like gloomy apparitions escaped from an Inquisition sentence, grotesque beings seeming to shed perfumes of incense and stench of burning flesh.

The mournful blast of the copper trumpets sounded, breaking the silence of the night. Above the points of the hoods the pennants of the fraternity, squares of black velvet edged with gold fringe, moved in the breeze; the Roman anagram, S. P. Q. R., recalled the intervention of the Prefect of Judea in the death of the Saviour.

The image of Our Father Jesus of the Great Power advanced on a heavy platform of wrought metal with black velvet hangings that grazed the ground, hiding the feet of the twenty sweaty, half-naked men who walked beneath carrying it. Four groups of lanterns with golden angels shone at the corners; in the centre was Jesus, a Jesus tragic, painful, bleeding, crowned with thorns, bent beneath the weight of the cross, his face cadaverous and his eyes tearful, dressed in an ample velvet tunic so covered with golden flowers that the rich cloth could scarcely be distinguished beneath the delicate arabesque in the complicated design of the embroidery.

descriptive

The presence of the Lord of the Great Power called forth sighs from hundreds. "Father Josú!" murmured the old women, their eyes fixed on the image with hypnotic stare. "Lord of the Great Power! Remember us!"

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

The image rested in the centre of a plaza with its escort of hooded inquisitionists, and the devotion of the Andalusian people, which confides all conditions of its soul to song, greeted the float with bird-like trills and interminable lamentations.

An infantile voice of tremulous sweetness broke the silence. It was a young woman who, advancing through the crowd until she stood in the first row, broke into a *sacra* to Jesus. The three verses of the song were for the Lord of Great Power, for the most divine statue, and for the sculptor Montañés, one of the great Spanish artists of the golden age.

This *sacra* was like the first shot of a battle that starts an interminable outburst of explosions. Hers was not yet ended when another was heard from a different quarter, and another and another, as if the plaza were a great cage of mad birds which, on being awakened by the voice of a companion, all joined in song at once in bewildering confusion. Masculine voices, grave and hoarse, united their sombre tones to the feminine trilling. All sang with their eyes fixed on the image, as if they stood alone before it, forgetting the crowd that surrounded them, deaf to the other voices, without losing place or hesitating in the complicated trills of the *sacra*, which made discord and mingled inharmoniously with the chanting of the others. The hooded brethren listened motionless, gazing at the Jesus, who received these warblings without ceasing to shed tears beneath the weight of the cross and the stinging pain of the thorns, until the conductor of the image, deciding that the halt be over, rang a silver bell on the fore-end of the platform. "Arise!" The Lord of Great

AIRING THE SAINTS

Power, after several vibrations, rose higher and the feet of the invisible bearers began to move along the ground like tentacles.

Next came the Virgin, "Our Lady of the Greater Sorrow," for every parish paraded two images — one of the Son of God and the other of His Holy Mother. Beneath a velvet canopy the golden crown of the Lady of Greater Sorrow trembled, surrounded by lights. The train of her mantle, many yards long, fell behind the image, held out by a kind of wooden hoop-skirt, showing the splendor of its heavy embroideries, glittering and costly, on which the skill and patience of an entire generation had been spent.

The hooded brethren, with sputtering torches, escorted the Virgin, the reflection of their lights trembling on this regal mantle which filled the scene with glittering splendor. To the sound of the double beat of drums marched a group of women, their bodies in shadow and their faces reddened by the flame of the candles they carried in their hands; old women in *mantillas*, with bare feet; young women dressed in white gowns originally intended as winding-sheets; women who walked with difficulty as though suffering from painful maladies — a whole battalion of suffering humanity, delivered from death through the mercy of the Lord of Great Power and His Most Holy Mother, walking behind their images to fulfil a vow.

The procession, after marching slowly through the streets, with long halts accompanied by songs, entered the cathedral, which remained open all night. The defile of lights on entering the enormous naves of this temple brought out from obscurity the gigantic columns

274

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

wrapped in purple hangings edged with lines of gold, without dissipating the thick darkness of the vaulted roof. The hooded men marched like black insects in the ruddy light of the torches below, while night was still massed above. They went out into the starlight again, leaving this crypt-like obscurity, and the sun surprised the procession in the open street, extinguishing the brilliancy of their torches, causing the gold of the holy vestments and the tears and sweat of agony on the images to glisten in the light of dawn.

Gallardo was devoted to the Lord of the Great Power and to the majestic silence of his fraternity, but this year he decided to parade with those of the Macarena who escorted the miraculous Virgin of Hope.

Señora Angustias was overjoyed when she heard his decision. Well did he owe it to this Virgin for having saved him from his last goading. Besides, this flattered her sentiments of plebian simplicity.

"Every one with his kind, Juaniyo. Thou goest with the upper class, but remember that the poor always loved thee and that they had begun to talk against thee, thinking that thou didst despise them."

The bull-fighter knew it too well. The tumultuous populace which occupied the bleachers in the plaza had begun to show a certain animosity toward him, thinking themselves forgotten. They criticised his intercourse with the rich and his drawing away from those who had been his first admirers. To overcome this animosity, Gallardo took advantage of every opportunity, flattering the rabble with the unscrupulous servility of those who must live by public applause. He had sent for the most influential brethren of the Macarena to explain

AIRING THE SAINTS

to them that he would be in the procession. The people must not know of it. He did it as a devotee and wished his act to remain a secret. But in a few days, nothing else was discussed in the whole ward. The Macarena would be carried this year in great beauty! They scorned the rich devotees of the Great Power with its orderly, insipid procession, and they gave attention only to their rivals of the boisterous Triana on the other side of the river, who were so arrogant over their objects of devotion, Our Lady of Protection and Christ of the Expiration, whom they called the Most Holy *Cachorro*.

Gallardo collected all his own and his wife's jewels to contribute to the Macarena's splendor. In her ears he would put some pendants of Carmen's which he had bought in Madrid, investing in them the profits of several bull-fights. On her breast she should wear his chain of rolled gold, and hanging from it all his rings and the great diamond buttons which he put in his shirt bosom when he went out dressed in courtly style.

"*Josú!* How fine our brunette will be," said the women of the neighborhood speaking of the Virgin. "Señor Juan is running everything. Half Seville will go mad with enthusiasm."

The *matador* believed in the Virgin and with devout egoism he wished to enter into her favor in view of future dangers, but he trembled as he thought of the jokes of his friends when they gathered in the *cafés* and societies on Sierpes Street.

"They will cut off my *coleta* if they recognize me. But one has to get along with everybody."

On Holy Thursday he went to the cathedral at night with his wife to hear the *Miserere*. The temple, with its

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

stupendously high vaulted arches, was without other light than that of the ruddy glow from the candles on the columns. The people of the better class were caged behind the grilles of the chapels on the sides, avoiding contact with the sweaty crowd that surged in the naves. The lights destined for the musicians and singers shone from out the obscurity of the choir like a constellation of red stars. Eslava's *Miserere* sent forth its sweet Italian melodies into this awesome atmosphere of shade and mystery. It was an Andalusian *Miserere*, somewhat playful and gay, like the flapping of bird wings, with romances like love serenades and choruses like revellers' roundelays, the joy of living in a fair land that causes forgetfulness of death and protests against the sorrow of the Passion.

When the tenor's voice ended the last romance and his lamentations were lost in the vaulted ceiling, apostrophizing the deicide city, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" the crowd scattered, desiring to return as soon as possible to the streets, which had the aspect of a theatre, with the electric lights, their rows of chairs on the sidewalks, and their boxes in the plazas.

Gallardo returned home to dress himself as a Nazarene. Señora Angustias had given much care to his costume, which took her back to the days of her youth. Ah! her poor husband, who on this night had put on his warlike trappings and, throwing his lance over his shoulder, had gone out into the streets not to return till the following day, when he came back with his helmet dented and his armour covered with filth, after having camped with his brothers-in-arms in all the taverns in Seville!

AIRING THE SAINTS

The swordsman cared for his underwear with feminine scrupulousness. He paid the Nazarene costume the same attentions he gave a fighting dress on a bull-fight afternoon. He put on silk stockings and patent leather shoes, and the white sateen gown prepared by his mother's hands, and over this the pointed cape of green velvet that fell from his shoulders to his knees, like a chasuble. The coat of arms of the fraternity was richly and carefully embroidered with a profusion of colors on one side of the breast. Then he drew on white gloves and grasped a tall cane, emblem of dignity in the fraternity; a staff covered with green velvet and tipped with silver.

In a narrow street Gallardo met the procession of the Company of the Jews, a troop of men in coats of mail, who, eager to show their warlike discipline, kept step as they marched in time to a drum that beat ceaselessly. They were young men and old, with their countenances framed by the metallic chin-straps of the helmet, wearing wine-colored habits, flesh-colored cotton hose, and high sandals. They wore the Roman sword at the belt, and, to imitate modern soldiers, the cord that held their lances hung from one shoulder, like a gun-case. At the head of the company floated the Roman banner with its senatorial inscription.

The procession marched with traditional slowness, stopping whole hours at the crossways. They did not value time. It was twelve o'clock at night and the Macarena would not return to her abode until twelve on the following morning, taking more time to travel about the city than is needed to go from Seville to Madrid.

First came the *paso* of the "Sentence of Our Lord

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Jesus Christ," a float filled with figures representing Pilate seated on a golden throne surrounded by soldiers in colored skirts and plumed helmets, watching the sad Jesus soon to march to the place of execution in a tunic of brown velvet covered with embroideries, and three golden plumes that signified rays of divinity above his crown of thorns. This *paso* proceeded without attracting attention, as if humbled by the proximity of the one that came after, the Queen of the popular wards, the miraculous Virgin of Hope, the Macarena. When the Virgin with the rosy cheeks and long lashes left San Gil beneath a trembling canopy of velvet, bowing with the movement of the hidden bearers, a deafening acclamation arose from the multitude that surged through the small plaza. But how pretty the great Señora! She never grew older!

The mantle, splendid, immense, with heavy gold embroidery that resembled the meshes of a net, hung behind the float, like the wide-spread tail of a gigantic peacock. Her glass eyes shone as if filled with tears of emotion in response to the acclamations of the faithful, and to this glitter was added the scintillation of the jewels that covered her body, forming an armor of gold and precious stones over the embroidered velvet. She seemed sprinkled with a shower of luminous drops, in which flamed all the colors of the rainbow. From her neck hung strings of pearls, chains of gold with dozens of rings linked together that scattered magic splendors as she moved. The tunic and the front of the mantle were hung with gold watches fastened on with pins, pendants of emeralds and diamonds, rings with enormous stones like luminous pebbles. All the devotees

AIRING THE SAINTS

sent their jewels that they might light the most Holy Macarena on her journey. The women exhibited their hands divested of ornaments on this night of religious sacrifice, happy to have the Mother of God display jewels that were their pride. The public knew them from having seen them every year. That one which the Virgin displayed on her breast, hanging from a chain, belonged to Gallardo, the bull-fighter. But others shared the popular honors along with him. Feminine glances devoured rapturously two enormous pearls and a strand of rings. They belonged to a girl of the ward who had gone to Madrid two years before, and being a devotee of the Macarena, returned to see the feast with an old gentleman. The luck of that girl — !

Gallardo, with his face covered, and leaning on a staff, the emblem of authority, marched before the *paso* with the dignitaries of the brotherhood. Other hooded brothers carried long trumpets adorned with green bannerets with fringes of gold. They raised the mouthpiece to an aperture in the masks, and an ear-splitting blast, an agonizing sound, rent the silence. But this hair-raising roar awoke no echo of death in the hearts that beat around them.

Along the dark and solitary cross-streets came whiffs of springtime breezes laden with garden perfumes, the fragrance of orange blossoms, and the aroma of flowers in pots ranged behind grilles and balconies. The blue of the sky paled at the caress of the moon which rested on a downy bed of clouds, thrusting its face between two gables. The melancholy defile seemed to march against the current of Nature, losing its funereal gravity at each step. In vain the trumpets sounded lamentations of

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

death, in vain the minstrels wept as they intoned the sacred verses, and in vain the grim executioners kept step with hangman's frown. The vernal night laughed, scattering its breath of perfumed life. No one dwelt on death.

Enthusiastic *Macarenos* surrounded the Virgin like a troop of revellers. Gardeners came from the suburbs with their dishevelled women who dragged a string of children by the hand, taking them on an excursion lasting until the dawn. Young fellows of the ward with new hats and with curls smoothed down over their ears flourished clubs with warlike fervor, as though some one were likely to display lack of respect for the beautiful Lady, so that the support of their arm would be necessary. All jostled together, crowding into the narrow streets between the enormous *paso* and the walls, but with their eyes fixed on those of the image, talking to her, hurling compliments to her beauty and miraculous power with the inconsistency produced by wine and their frivolous bird-like minds.

"*Olé, la Macarena!* The greatest Virgin in the world! She who excels all other Virgins!"

Every fifty steps the sacred platform was halted. There was no hurry. The journey was long. At many houses they demanded that the Virgin stop so that they could gaze on her at leisure. Every tavern keeper also asked for a pause at the door of his establishment, alleging his rights as a citizen of the ward. A man crossed the street directing his steps toward the hooded brethren with the staffs who walked in advance of the float.

"Hold! Let them stop! For here is the greatest singer in the world who wishes to sing a couplet to the Virgin."

AIRING THE SAINTS

"The greatest singer in the world," leaning against one friend, and handing his glass to another, advanced toward the image with shaking legs, and after clearing his throat delivered a torrent of hoarse sounds in which trills obliterated the clarity of the words. It could only be understood that he sang to the "Mother," the Mother of God, and as he uttered this word, his voice acquired additional tremors of emotion with that sensibility to popular poesy that finds its most sincere inspiration in maternal love.

Another and then another voice was heard, as if the minstrel had started a musical contest; as if the street were filled with invisible birds, some hoarse and rasping, others shrill, with a penetrating screech that suggested a red and swollen throat, ready to burst. Most of the singers kept hidden in the crowd, with the simplicity of devotion that does not crave to be seen in its manifestations; others were eager to exhibit themselves, planting themselves in the midst of the crowd before the holy Macarena.

When the songs ended the public burst into vulgar exclamations of enthusiasm, and again the Macarena, the beautiful, the only, was glorified, and wine circulated in glasses around the feet of the image; the most vehement threw their hats at her as if she were a real girl, a pretty girl, and it was not clear now whether it was the fervor of the faithful who sang to the Virgin, or a pagan orgy that accompanied her transit through the streets.

In advance of the float went a youth dressed in a violet tunic and crowned with thorns. He trod the bluish paving stones with bare feet and marched with his body bowed beneath the weight of a cross twice as big as him-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

self, and when after a long wait he rejoined the float, good souls aided him to drag his burden.

The women wept with tender compassion as they saw him. Poor boy! With what holy fervor he performed his penance. Every one in the ward remembered his sacrilegious crime. Accursed wine, that turns men mad! Three years before, on the morning of Holy Friday, when the Macarena was about to retire to her church after having wandered all night through the streets of Seville, this sinner, who was really a good boy and had been revelling with his friends overnight, had compelled the float to stop at a tavern on the plaza of the market-place. He sang to the Virgin, and then, possessed of a holy enthusiasm, burst into endearing expressions, *Olé! Pretty Macarena!* He loved her more than his sweetheart! To better express his faith, he threw at her feet what he had in his hand, thinking it was his hat, and a wine glass burst on the handsome face of the great Lady. They took him weeping to the police station. But he loved the Macarena as if she were his mother! It was the accursed wine that made men do they knew not what! He trembled with fear at the years of imprisonment awaiting him for disrespect to religion; he shed tears of repentance for his sacrilege; until finally, even the most indignant interceded in his favor and the matter was settled by his promise to give an example to sinners by performing an extraordinary penance. Sweaty and panting he dragged the cross, changing the position of the burden when one of his shoulders became numbed by the painful weight. His comrades pitied him; they dared not laugh at his penance, and they compassionately offered him glasses of wine. But he turned his eyes

AIRING THE SAINTS

away from the offering, fixing them on the Virgin to make her a witness to his martyrdom. He would drink the next day without fear, when the Macarena was left safe in her church.

The float halted in a street of the ward of the Feria, and now the head of the procession had reached the centre of Seville. The green-hooded brethren and the company wearing the coats of mail advanced with warlike mien like an army marching to attack. They wished to reach Campana Street and take possession of the entrance to Sierpes Street before another fraternity should present itself. The vanguard once in control of this position could tranquilly await the Virgin's arrival. The *Macarenos* each year made themselves masters of the famous street and took whole hours to pass through it, enjoying the impatient protests of the fraternities of other wards.

Sierpes Street was converted into a sort of reception hall with the balconies thronged with people, electric globes hanging from wires strung from wall to wall, and all the *cafés* and stores illuminated; the windows were filled with heads, and rows of chairs along the walls, with crowds, rising in their seats each time the distant trumpeting and beating of the drums announced the proximity of a float.

It was three in the morning and nothing indicated the lateness of the hour. People were eating in *cafés* and taverns. The thick odor of oil escaped through the doors of the places where fish was frying. Itinerant venders stationed themselves in the centre of the street crying sweets and drinks. Whole families who only came to light on occasions of great festivity, had been

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

there from two o'clock in the afternoon watching the passing of processions and more processions. There were Virgins with mantles of overwhelming sumptuousness which drew shouts of admiration by their display of velvet; Redeemers, crowned with gold and wearing vestments of brocade, and a whole world of absurd images whose tragic, bleeding, or tearful faces contrasted with the theatrical luxury and richness of their clothing. Foreigners, attracted by the strangeness of this Christian ceremony, joyous as a pagan feast in which there were no faces of woe and sadness but those of the images, heard their names called out by Sevillians seated near them. The floats started off — those of the Sacred Decree of the Holy Christ of Silence; of Our Lady of Sorrows; of Jesus with the Cross on His Shoulder; of Our Lady of the Valley; of Our Father Jesus of the Three Falls; of Our Lady of Tears; of the Lord of Good Death; and of Our Lady of the Three Necessities, accompanied by Nazarenes black and white, red, green, blue and violet, all masked, hiding their mysterious personality beneath their pointed hoods.

The heavy platforms advanced slowly and with great difficulty because of the narrowness of the street. On reaching the plaza of San Francisco, opposite the viewing stand built in front of the Government palace, the floats made a half-turn until they stood facing the images and by a genuflexion of their bearers they saluted the illustrious strangers and royal personages gathered to witness the feast.

Near the floats marched boys with pitchers of water. The catafalque had scarcely stopped when a fold of the velvet hangings which hid its interior was raised and

AIRING THE SAINTS

twenty or thirty men appeared, sweaty, purple from fatigue, half naked, with handkerchiefs bound around their heads, and looking like tired savages. They were the so-called "Galicians," in which geographic appellation are confounded all lusty workmen whatever may be their origin, as though the other sons of the country were not capable of constant or fatiguing labor. They greedily drank the water, or, if there were a tavern near, they rebelled against the director of the float and demanded wine. Thus the festivities were prolonged through the whole night, frivolous, gay, and theatrical. In vain the brass horns sent forth their death-laments proclaiming the greatest of crimes, the unjust death of a God. Nature did not respond to this traditional sorrow. The river went purling on beneath the bridges, spreading its luminous sheet through the silent fields; the orange trees, incense-givers of the night, opened their thousand white mouths and shed the fragrance of voluptuous fruit upon the air; the palms waved their clusters of plumes over the Moorish ramparts of the Alcázar; the Giralda, a blue phantom, vanished in the heavens, eclipsing stars and hiding a portion of the sky behind its shapely mass; and the moon, intoxicated by nocturnal perfumes, seemed to smile at the earth swollen with the nutrient sap of spring, at the luminous furrow-like streets of the city in whose ruddy depths swarmed a multitude content just to be alive, which drank and sang and found a pretext for interminable feasting in a tragic death of long ago.

At the door of a *café* stood Nacional with all his family watching the passing of the brotherhood. "Superstition and ignorance!" But he followed the custom,

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

coming every year to witness the invasion of Sierpes Street by the noisy Macarenes.

He immediately recognized Gallardo by his genteel bearing and the athletic jauntiness with which he wore the inquisitorial vestment.

“Juanillo; have the procession stop. There are some foreign ladies in the *café* who want to get a good look at the Macarena.”

The sacred platform came to a halt; the band played a gay march, one of those that enlivens the audience at the bull-ring, and immediately the hidden conductors of the float commenced to raise one leg in unison, then the other, executing a dance that made the catafalque move with violent undulations, crowding the people against the walls. The Virgin, with the burden of her heavy mantle, jewels, flowers, and lanterns, danced to the music. This exhibition was the result of practice and one which was the pride of the *Macarenos*. The good youths of the ward, holding both sides of the float, supported it during this violent commotion and shouted with enthusiasm at this exhibition of strength and skill.

“Let all Seville come to see this! It is great! This only the *Macarenos* do!”

And when the music and the undulations ceased and the float again stood still there was thunderous applause mingled with impious and vulgar compliments to the Most Holy Macarena. They shouted *vivas* to the Most Holy Macarena, the sainted, the only.

The brotherhood continued on its triumphal march, leaving stragglers in every tavern and fallen on every street. The sun, as it rose, surprised it far from the parish at the extreme opposite side of Seville, made the

AIRING THE SAINTS

jewelled armor on the image scintillate with its first rays, and lighted up the livid countenances of the Nazarenes who had taken off their masks. The image and her attendants, overtaken by the dawn, resembled a dissolute troop returning from an orgy. The two floats were abandoned in the middle of the street near the market, while the whole procession took an eye-opener in the nearby taverns, substituting great glasses of Cazalla and Rute brandy for native wine. The hooded brethren's white garments were now filthy rags; nothing but miserable relics remained of the brilliant "Jewish" army which looked as though returning from a defeat. The captain walked with unsteady step, the melancholy plumes fallen over his livid countenance, his only thought to defend his glorious raiment from being rubbed and pulled to pieces. Respect the uniform!

Gallardo left the procession soon after sunrise. He had done enough in accompanying the Virgin all night and surely she would take it into account. Besides, this last part of the feast, until the Macarena entered San Gil, now nearly midday, was the most disagreeable. The people who arose fresh and tranquil from sleep jested at the hooded brethren so ridiculous in the sunlight, dragging along in their drunkenness and filth. It was not prudent for a matador to be seen with them.

Señora Angustias kept watch for him in the courtyard and helped the Nazarene take off his vestments. He must rest after having fulfilled his duty to the Virgin. Easter Sunday he was to have a bull-fight; the first after his accident. Accursed trade! For him rest was impossible, and the poor women, after a period of tranquillity, saw their old fears and anguish renewed.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MASTERY OF SELF-PRESERVATION

SATURDAY and Sunday morning Gallardo received calls from enthusiastic connoisseurs from outside Seville who had come for the *fiestas* of Holy Week and to the Feria. All were smiling, confident of his future heroism.

"We'll see how thou'lt stand up! The devotees have their eyes fixed on thee. How is thy strength?"

Gallardo did not doubt his vigor. The months spent in the country had strengthened him. He was now as strong as before he had been gored. The only thing that made him recall his accident when hunting on the plantation was a certain weakness in the wounded leg. But this he only noticed after long trips.

"I'll do all I know how to do," murmured Gallardo. "I don't think I'll be altogether bad."

The manager put in a word with the mad blindness of his faith.

"Thou'lt flourish like the roses themselves — like an angel."

Then, forgetting the bull-fight for a moment, they commented on a piece of news that had just circulated through the city.

On a mountain in the province of Córdoba the civil guard had found a decomposed body with a head mutilated and almost blown off by a gun-shot. It was impos-

MASTERY OF SELF-PRESERVATION

sible to recognize it, but the clothing, the carbine, all made them believe it was Plumitas. Gallardo listened in silence. He had not seen the bandit since his accident, but he remembered him well. His plantation hands had told him that while he was in danger Plumitas twice presented himself at La Rinconada to inquire for his health. Afterward, while living there with his family, herders and laborers spoke to him several times mysteriously about Plumitas, who, when he met them on the highway and learned that they were from La Rinconada, gave them greetings for Señor Juan. Poor man! Gallardo pitied him, recalling his predictions. The civil guard had not killed him. He had been assassinated while asleep. He had perished at the hands of one of his kind, of one of his followers, seeking notoriety.

Sunday his departure for the plaza was more trying than ever. Carmen made strong efforts to be calm and was even present while Garabato dressed the *maestro*. She smiled, with a sad smile; she feigned gayety, thinking she noticed in her husband an equal anxiety which he also tried to hide under a forced exhilaration. Señora Angustias paced up and down outside the room to see her Juan once more, as though she were about to lose him. When Gallardo went out into the courtyard with his cap on and his cape over his shoulder the mother threw her arms around his neck, shedding tears. She did not utter a word, but her heavy sobs revealed her thoughts. To fight for the first time after his accident, in the same plaza where he had been gored! The superstition of the woman of the people rebelled against this foolhardiness. Ah! When would he retire from the accursed trade? Had he not enough money yet?

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

But the brother-in-law intervened with authority as the grave family counsellor. "Come, *Mamita*, this does not amount to so much — a bull-fight like all the others! Juan must be left in peace and his serenity must not be upset by this continual crying just as he is to start for the plaza.

Carmen accompanied her husband to the door; she wished to encourage him. Besides, since her love had been reawakened by the accident and she and Juan had again been living happily together, she would not believe that a new misfortune would come to disturb her joy. That goring was an act of God, who often brings good out of ill, and He wished to draw them together again by this means. Juan would fight bulls as before and would come home well and sound.

"Good luck to thee!"

With loving eyes she watched the carriage that drove away followed by a troop of ragamuffins. When the poor woman was left alone she went up to her room and lighted candles before an image of the Virgin of Hope.

Nacional rode in the coach at his master's side, frowning and gloomy. That Sunday was election day, but his companions in the *cuadrilla* had not heard of it. The people only talked of Plumitas' death and of the bull-fight. The *banderillero* had remained with his fellow committeemen until past mid-day, "working for the idea." Accursed *corrida* that came to interrupt his duties as a good citizen, preventing him from taking to the polls several friends who would not vote if he did not go for them. Only "those of the idea" went to the voting places; the city seemed to ignore the existence of the elections. There were great groups in the streets

MASTERY OF SELF-PRESERVATION

arguing passionately; but they only talked of bulls. What people! Nacional recollected with indignation the schemes and outrages of the opposition to bring about this neglect of civic duty. Don Joselito, who had protested with all his forensic eloquence, was in prison with other companions. The *banderillero*, who would gladly have shared their martyrdom, had been obliged to abandon them, to put on his glittering costume and follow his master. Was this outrage to good citizens to go unrebuked? Would not the people rise in retaliation?

As the coach passed the vicinity of Campana Street the bull-fighters saw a great crowd flourishing clubs and heard them shouting. The police, sabres in hand, were charging upon them, receiving blows and returning them two for one.

Ah, at last! The moment had arrived!

"The revolution! The fight is on!"

But the *maestro*, half smiling, half angry, pushed him back into his seat.

"Don't be a fool, Sebastián; thou seest nothing but revolutions and hobgoblins everywhere."

The members of the *cuadrilla* smiled, divining the fact that it was only the noble people, angered at not being able to get tickets for the bull-fight at the office on Campana Street, and who now wanted to attack and burn it, but were held in check by the police. Nacional sadly hung his head.

"Reaction and ignorance! The lack of knowing how to read and write."

They arrived at the plaza. A noisy ovation, an interminable outburst of hand-clapping, greeted the appearance of the *cuadrillas* in the ring. All the applause

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

was for Gallardo. The public hailed his first appearance in the arena after the terrible injury that had caused so much talk all over the Peninsula.

When the moment came for Gallardo to kill his first bull the explosion of enthusiasm was repeated. The women in white *mantillas* watched him from the boxes with their glasses. On the "bleachers" they applauded and acclaimed him, as did those in the shade. Even his enemies were won by this sympathetic impulse. Poor boy! He had suffered so much! The plaza was all his own. Gallardo had never seen an audience so completely given over to himself.

He took off his cap before the president's box to offer his bull. *Olé! Olé!* No one heard a word, but all were wild with enthusiasm. He must have said very fine things. The applause accompanied him when he turned toward the bull, and hushed in expectant silence when he stood near the wild beast. He extended the *muleta*, standing planted before the creature, but at some distance, not as on former occasions, when he had fired the audience by thrusting the red rag almost into the animal's eyes. In the silence of the plaza there was a movement of surprise—but no one spoke. Gallardo stamped the ground several times to incite the animal, and at last the bull attacked mildly, barely passing beneath the *muleta*, for the bull-fighter hurriedly moved aside with shameless precipitation. The people looked at one another in surprise. What was that?

The *matador* saw Nacional at his side and not far off another *peón* of the *cuadrilla*, but he did not shout, "Stand aside, everybody!" On the great tiers of seats a murmur arose, the noise of vehement conversation. Gallardo's

MASTERY OF SELF-PRESERVATION

friends thought it well to explain in the name of their idol.

"He is not wholly recovered yet. He ought not to fight. That leg — don't you see it?"

The two lackeys' capes assisted the swordsman in his *pases*. The animal moved in confusion between the red cloths and no sooner had he attacked the *muleta* than he noticed the cape-work of another bull-fighter, distracting his attention from the swordsman. Gallardo, as if eager to get out of the situation quickly, squared himself with his sword held high, and threw himself upon the bull.

A murmur of stupefaction followed the stroke. The sword was plunged in less than a third of its length, and hung vibrating, ready to fall out of the neck. Gallardo had jumped back from the horns, without burying his sword down to the hilt as he used to do.

"But it is well placed!" shouted his partisans, pointing to the sword, and they applauded clamorously to make up in noise for lack of numbers.

The "intelligent" smiled with pity. That boy was going to lose the only notable thing he had — valor, daring. They had seen him bend his arm instinctively at the moment of walking up to the bull with the sword; they had seen him turn away his face with that movement of terror that impels men to close their eyes to hide a danger.

The sword rolled along the ground and Gallardo, taking another, turned upon the bull again accompanied by his *peones*. Nacional's cape was ever ready to be spread out before him, to distract the wild beast; besides, the bellowing of the *banderillero* confused the bull and made him turn whenever he drew near to Gallardo.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Another thrust of the same kind, more than half of the steel blade remaining in sight.

"He does n't get close!" they began to protest on the tiers of seats. "He's afraid of the horns!"

Gallardo extended his arms before the bull, his body making the figure of the cross, as if giving the audience behind him to understand that the animal already had enough with that thrust and would fall at any moment. But the wild beast remained standing, shaking his head from side to side.

Nacional, exciting him with the rag, made him run, taking advantage of every opportunity to beat him on the neck lustily, with all the force of his arm. The audience, divining his intentions, began to protest. He was making the animal run so that the motion would work the sword in deeper. His heavy blows with his cape were to drive in the sword. They called him a thief; they alluded to his mother with ugly words, impugning the legitimacy of his birth; menacing clubs waved above the "bleachers" in the sun; oranges and bottles began to fly into the arena, but he acted as if deaf and blind to this shower of insults and projectiles, and kept on chasing the bull with the satisfaction of one who fulfils his duty and saves a friend.

Suddenly a stream of blood gushed from the beast's mouth, and he doubled up his forelegs and knelt motionless but with his head high, ready to get up and attack. The *puntillero* came up eager to finish him and get the *maestro* out of his embarrassing position. Nacional helped him, leaning cunningly against the sword and driving it in up to the hilt. The people in the sun, who saw this manœuvre, rose to their feet with angry protest.



The animal moved in confusion between the red cloths drawing him far away from the swordsman

MASTERY OF SELF-PRESERVATION

“Thief! Assassin!”

They protested in the name of the poor bull, as though he were not destined to die at all hazards; they threatened Nacional with their fists, as though they had witnessed a crime, and the *banderillero*, with bowed head, finally took refuge behind the barrier. Gallardo, meanwhile, walked toward the president's box to salute him, and his undaunted admirers accompanied him with a din of applause.

“He's had bad luck,” they said with ardent faith, refusing to be undeceived. “But the sword-thrusts, how well aimed! No one can dispute that.”

Gallardo went and stood an instant before the seats where sat his most fervent partisans, and leaned against the barrier, making his explanations. The bull was bad; it was impossible to make a good job of him. His enthusiasts, Don José at their head, assented to these excuses, which were the same that they themselves had invented.

During a great part of the bull-fight Gallardo remained on the vaulting wall of the *barrera*. Such explanations might suffice for his partisans, but he felt a cruel doubt, a lack of self-confidence, the like of which he had never known before. The bulls seemed bigger, as if possessed of *double life*, giving them greater resistance against death. They used to fall beneath his sword with such miraculous ease. No, they had let the worst of the herd out for him to disconcert him. An intrigue of his enemies! Another suspicion dwelt confusedly in the obscure depths of his mind, but he did not wish to consider it close; he had no interest in extracting it from its mysterious shade. His arm seemed shorter the moment he held it before him with the sword. It used to

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

reach the wild beast's neck with the swiftness of a lightning flash; now the distance seemed interminable, a terrifying void which he knew not how to bridge. His legs also seemed to be other and different, to live apart, with a will of their own, independent of the rest of his body. In vain he ordered them to remain quiet and firm as before. They did not obey. They seemed to have eyes, to see the danger, to spring with unwonted lightness, without the self-control to stand still when they felt the vibrations of the air stirred by the rush of the wild beast.

In the blindness of his rage at his own sudden weakness Gallardo blamed the public for his mortification. What did these people want? — that he should let himself be killed to give them pleasure? Signs enough of mad audacity he bore on his body. He did not need to prove his courage. That he was alive was due to a miracle, thanks to celestial intervention, to God's goodness, and to his mother's and his poor little wife's prayers. He had seen the dry face of Death as few see it, and he knew the worth of life better than any other.

"Perhaps you think you're going to take my scalp!" he thought, while he contemplated the multitude.

He would fight bulls in future as did many of his friends, some days he would do it well, others ill. Bull-fighting was nothing but a trade, and once the highest places were gained the important thing was to live and keep oneself out of danger as best one could. He was not going to let himself be caught merely for the pleasure of having the people give tongue to his courage.

When the moment came for killing his second bull, these thoughts inspired a quiet courage within him. No

MASTERY OF SELF-PRESERVATION

animal should finish him! He would do all he could without placing himself within reach of the horns. As he strode up to the wild beast he wore the same arrogant mien as on his great afternoons. "Stand aside, everybody!"

The crowd stirred with a murmur of satisfaction. He had said, "Stand aside, everybody!" He was going to do some of his greatest feats. But what the public expected did not take place, nor did Nacional cease walking behind him, his cape over his arm, divining, with the cunning of an old *peón* accustomed to bull-fighters' artful tricks, the theatrical falseness of his master's command. Gallardo held the rag some distance away from the bull and began to make *pases* with visible caution, each time remaining at a good distance from the wild beast and aided always by Sebastián's cape.

As he stood an instant with his *muleta* held low the bull made a movement as if to charge, but did not stir. The swordsman, excessively alert, was deceived by this movement and sprang backward, fleeing from the animal that had not attacked him. This needless retreat placed him in a ridiculous position and part of the audience laughed, while others uttered exclamations of surprise. Some hisses were heard.

"Ouch, he'll catch thee!" shouted an ironic voice.

"*Sarasa!*" groaned another with effeminate intonation.

Gallardo reddened with fury. This to him! And in the plaza of Seville! He felt the bold heart-throb of earlier days and a mad desire to fall blindly upon the bull and to let happen whatever God willed. But his body refused to obey him! His arm seemed to think; his legs saw the danger, mocking the demands of his

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

will with their rebellion! Yet the audience, resenting the insult, came to his aid and imposed silence. Treat a man thus who was convalescing from a serious injury! This was unworthy the plaza of Seville! Let it be seen if there were such a thing as decency!

Gallardo made the most of this sympathetic compassion, to extricate himself from the difficulty. Walking sideways beside the bull, he stabbed him with a sidelong treacherous plunge. The animal fell like a slaughter-house beast, a stream of blood gushing out of his mouth. Some applauded without knowing why, others hissed, and the great mass remained silent.

"They have let insidious dogs out to him!" clamored the manager from his seat, although the *corrida* was supplied with bulls from the Marquis' own herd. "Why, those are not bulls! We shall see what he will do the next time, when he has truly noble beasts."

Gallardo noted the silence of the crowd as he left the plaza. The groups near him passed without a greeting, without one of those acclamations with which they used to receive him on happier afternoons. The miserable gang that stays outside the plaza awaiting news, and before the finish of the *corrida* knows all its incidents, did not even follow the carriage.

Gallardo tasted the bitterness of defeat for the first time. Even his *banderilleros* rode frowning and silent like soldiers in retreat. But when he reached home and felt around his neck his mother's arms, Carmen's, and even his sister's, and his little nephews' caresses as they hugged his legs, he felt his dejection vanish. Curse it! The important thing was to live; to keep his family happy; to earn the public's money as other bull-fighters

MASTERY OF SELF-PRESERVATION

did without those daring deeds which sooner or later would cause his death.

The next few days he felt that he ought to exhibit himself and talk with his friends in the popular *cafés* and clubs on Sierpes Street. He thought he could impose a courteous silence upon his detractors and prevent comment on his ill success. He spent whole afternoons in the gatherings of humble admirers he had abandoned long before when seeking the friendship of the rich. And finally he entered the Forty-five where the manager imposed his opinions by loud talking and gesticulation, upholding Gallardo's glory as of old.

Great Don José! His enthusiasm was immovable, bomb-proof! It never occurred to him that his *matador* could cease to be all that he had believed. Not one criticism, not one reproach for his downfall! Instead he took it upon himself to excuse him, adding to this the consolation of his good advice.

"Thou still dost feel thy wound. What I say is, 'You shall see, when he is quite well, and you will talk differently then.' Thou wilt do as before—thou wilt walk straight up to the bull, with that courage God has given thee, and, *zas!* a stab up to the cross—and thou wilt put him in thy pocket."

Gallardo approved with an enigmatical smile. "Put the bulls in his pocket!" He desired nothing else. But, alas! they had become so big and unmanageable! They had grown during the time of his absence from the arena!

Gambling consoled him and made him forget his troubles. He went back with fresh passion to losing money over the green table, impelled by that spirit of youth which was undaunted by lack of luck. One night

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

they took him to dine at the Eritaña Inn where there was a great revel in honor of three foreign women of the gay life whom some of the young men had met in Paris. They had come to Seville to see the feasts of Holy Week and the Feria, and they were eager for the picturesque features of the country. Their beauty was somewhat faded, but was retouched by the arts of the toilet. The rich young fellows pursued them, attracted by their exotic charm, soliciting generous favors which were seldom refused. They expressed a wish to know a celebrated bull-fighter, one of the smartest *matadores*, that fine Gallardo whose picture they had so often looked at in the papers and on match-boxes. After having seen him in the plaza they had asked their friends to present him.

→ The gathering took place in the great dining-room of the Eritaña, a *salon* opening on the garden with tawdry Moorish decorations, a poor imitation of the splendors of the Alhambra. Here balls and political banquets were held. Here they toasted the regeneration of the country with fervent oratory, and here the charms of the fair sex were displayed to the rhythm of the *tango*, and the twang-twang of the guitars, while kisses and screams were heard in the corners, and bottles were uncorked lavishly. Gallardo was received like a demi-god by the three women who, ignoring their friends, stared only at him, and disputed for the honor of sitting beside him, caressing him with the eyes of she-wolves in the mating season. They reminded him of another — of the absent, the almost forgotten one — with their golden hair, their elegant gowns, and the atmosphere of perfumed and tempting flesh which seemed to envelope him in a swirl of intoxication.

MASTERY OF SELF-PRESERVATION

His comrades' presence further contributed to making this memory more vivid. They were all Doña Sol's friends; some of them even belonged to her family and he had looked upon them as relatives.

They ate and drank with that savage voracity of nocturnal feasts, to which people go with the fixed intention of excess in everything, taking refuge in drunkenness as soon as possible to acquire the happiness of stupidity.

In one end of the *salon* some gypsies strummed their guitars, intoning melancholy songs. One of the foreign women, with the enthusiasm of the neophyte, sprang upon a table and began to slowly move her well rounded hips, seeking to imitate the native dances, showing off her progress after a few days of instruction by a Sevillian teacher.

"*Asáúra! Malaje! Sosa!*" the friends shouted ironically, encouraging her with rhythmic hand-clappings.

They jested at her heaviness, but with devouring eyes they admired the beauty of her body. And she, proud of her art, taking these incomprehensible calls for enthusiastic praise, went on moving her hips and raised her arms above her head like the handles of a jar, with her gaze aloft.

After midnight they were all drunk. The women, lost to shame, besieged the swordsman with their admiring glances. He impassively let himself be managed by the hands that disputed for him, while lips surprised him with burning kisses on his cheeks and neck. He was drunk, but his drunkenness was sad. Ah! the other woman! The true blonde! The gold of these unbound locks that floated around him was artificial, gilded by chemicals applied to coarse strong hair. The lips had a flavor of perfumed ointment. Through the

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

aroma his imagination detected an odor of vulgarity. Ah! the other one ! the other one !

Gallardo, without knowing how, found himself in the gardens, beneath the solemn silence that seemed to fall from the stars, among arbors of luxurious vegetation, following a tortuous path, seeing the dining-room windows through the foliage illuminated like mouths of Hell before which passed and repassed shadows like black demons. A woman was dragging him by the arm, and he let himself be taken, without even seeing her, with his thoughts far, far away.

An hour afterwards he returned to the dining-room. His companion, her hair disordered, her eyes brilliant and hostile, was talking with her friends. They laughed and pointed him out with a deprecatory gesture to the other men, who laughed also — Ah ! Spain ! Land of disillusion, where all was but legend, even to the prowess of her heroes !

Gallardo drank more and more. The women who had quarrelled over him, besieging him with their caresses, turned their backs on him, falling into the arms of the other men. The guitarists scarcely played; surfeited with wine, they leaned over their instruments in pleasant drowsiness.

The bull-fighter also was going to sleep on a bench when one of his friends, who was obliged to retire before his mother, the countess, arose, as she did every day to attend mass at daybreak, offered to take him home in his carriage. The night wind did not dissipate the bull-fighter's intoxication. When the friend left him at the corner of his street Gallardo walked with vacillating step in the direction of his home. Near the door he stopped,

MASTERY OF SELF-PRESERVATION

grasping the wall with both hands and resting his head on his arms as if he could not bear the weight of his thoughts.

He had completely forgotten his friends, the supper at Eritaña, and the three painted foreign women who had quarrelled for him and then insulted him. Something remained in his memory of the other one, ever there, but indefinite and vague! Now his mind, by one of those capricious bounds of intoxication, reverted wholly to bull-fighting. He was the greatest *matador* in the world. *Olé!* So his manager and his friends declared, and it was true. His adversaries should see something when he went back to the plaza. What happened the other day was simple carelessness; Bad Luck that had played one of her tricks on him.

Proud of the omnipotent strength that intoxication communicated to him at the moment, he saw all the Andalusian and Castilian bulls transformed into weak goats that he could overthrow with but a blow from his hand. What occurred the other day was nothing — *liquid!* as Nacional said. The best singer lets slip a false note now and then.

And this aphorism, learned from the mouths of venerable patriarchs of the bull-fighting profession on afternoons of misfortune, stimulated him with an irresistible desire to sing, and he filled the silence of the solitary street with his voice. With his head resting on his arms he began to hum a strophe of his own composition which was an extravagant hymn of praise to his own merits. "I am Juaniyo Gallardo — with more c — c — courage than God." Not being able to improvise more in his own honor, he repeated the same words over and over in a

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

hoarse and monotonous voice that broke the silence and set an invisible dog down the street to barking.

It was the paternal heritage revived in him; the singing mania that accompanied Señor Juan the cobbler on his weekly drunken rounds.

The house door opened and Garabato, still half asleep, thrust out his head to see the drunken man, whose voice he thought he recognized.

"Ah! Is it thou?" said the *matador*. "Wait till I sing the last one."

He repeated the incomplete song in honor of his valor several times, until he finally decided to enter the house. He felt no desire to go to bed. Divining his condition, he put off the moment of going up to his room where Carmen awaited him, perhaps awake.

"Go to sleep, Garabato. I have a great deal to do."

He did not know what, but his office, with its decoration of vainglorious pictures, favors won in the bull-ring, and posters that proclaimed his fame, attracted him.

When the globes of electric light illuminated the room and the servant went out, Gallardo stood in the centre of the office, vacillating on his legs, casting a glance of admiration around the walls, as if he contemplated this museum of glory for the first time.

"Very good, but very good!" he murmured. "That fine fellow is me; and that one too, and all! And yet there are some people that talk against me! Curse it! I'm the greatest man in the world! Don José says so, and he tells the truth."

He threw his hat upon the divan as if he were taking off a crown of glory that oppressed his forehead, and staggered over to the desk, leaning against it, his gaze

MASTERY OF SELF-PRESERVATION

fixed on an enormous bull's head that adorned the wall at the lower end of the office.

"Hello! Good-evening, my good boy! What art thou pretending to do there? Moo! Moo!"

He greeted him with bellowings, childishly imitating the lowing of the bulls in the pasture and in the plaza. He did not recognize him; he could not remember why the hairy head with its threatening horns was there. Gradually he began to recollect.

"I know thee, boy! I remember how thou madest me rage that afternoon. The people hissed, they threw bottles at me, they even insulted my poor mother, and thou, so gay, what fun thou hadst! — eh? — shameless beast!"

In his intoxicated state he thought he saw the varnished muzzle and the light in the glass eyes tremble with laughter. He even imagined that the horns moved the head, assenting to this question, with an undulation of the hanging neck.

The drunken man, until then smiling and good natured, felt his anger rise with the recollection of that afternoon of misfortune. And even that evil beast smiled? Those wicked, crafty, scheming bulls, which seemed to jest at the combatant, were to blame when a man was ridiculed. Ah! how Gallardo detested them! What a look of hatred he fastened on the glass eyes of the horned head!

"Still laughing? Damn thee, *guasón*! Cursed be the cow that bore thee and thy thief of a master that gave thee grass in his pasture! I hope he's in prison. Still laughing? Still making faces at me?"

In his fury he leaned his body on the table stretching

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

out his arms and opening the drawers. Then he stood erect, raising one hand toward the horned head.

Bang! bang! Two shots from a revolver.

A glass globe in the hollow of one eye burst into tiny fragments and a round black hole, circled by singed hair, opened in the forehead.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SPANISH LILITH

WITH the extreme violence characteristic of the changeable and erratic climate of Madrid in the midspring the temperature gave a jump backwards.

It was cold. The gray sky was lavish of terrific rains, accompanied sometimes by flakes of snow. The people, already dressed in light clothing, opened wardrobes and chests to get out wraps and overcoats. The rain blackened and ruined the white spring hats.

No functions had been given in the bull plaza for two weeks. The Sunday *corrida* was postponed until a weekday when the weather should be fine. The management, the employees of the plaza, and the innumerable devotees whom this forced suspension cast into an ill humor, watched the firmament with the anxiety of the peasant who fears for his crops. A clearing in the sky, or the appearance of a few stars at midnight when they left the *cafés*, made them cheerful again.

"It's going to clear up—bull-fight day after to-morrow."

But the clouds gathered again, the dark gloomy weather with its continual rain persisted, and the devotees of the game grew indignant at a climate that seemed to have declared war on the national sport. Unhappy country! Even bull-fights were becoming impossible in it!

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Gallardo had spent two weeks in enforced rest. His *cuadrilla* complained of the inactivity. In any other town in Spain the bull-fighters would have endured this lack of work resignedly. The *matador* paid their board in the hotels everywhere except in Madrid. It was a bad rule established long ago by the *maestros* who lived in the capital. It was assumed that all bull-fighters must have their own home in the court city. And the poor lackeys and *picadores*, who lived at a miserable boarding-house kept by the widow of a *banderillero*, cut down their living by all manner of economies, smoking little and standing in the doors of *cafés*. They thought of their families with the longing of men who in exchange for their blood receive but a handful of *pesetas*. When the two bull-fights were over the proceeds from them would already be eaten up.

The *matador* was equally ill-humored in the solitude of his hotel, not because of the weather, but rather on account of his poor luck. He had fought his first *corrida* in Madrid with a deplorable result. The public had changed toward him. He still had partisans of dauntless faith who were strong in his defence; but these enthusiasts, noisy and aggressive a year ago, now showed a certain indifference, and when they found occasion to applaud him they did so with timidity. On the other hand, his enemies and that great mass of the public that look for dangers and deaths,—how unjust in their condemnations! How bold in insulting him! What they tolerated in other *matadores* they prohibited in him.

With the eagerness of a celebrity who feels that he is losing prestige, Gallardo exhibited himself prodigally in the places frequented by the devotees of the game.

THE SPANISH LILITH

He went into the *Café Inglés*, where the partisans of the Andalusian bull-fighters gather, and by his presence prevented implacable commentaries being heaped upon his name. He himself, smiling and modest, started the conversation with a humility that disarmed the most hostile.

"It's true I did n't do well; I know it. But you will see at the next bull-fight, when the weather clears up. What can be done will be done."

He dared not enter certain *cafés* near the *Puerta del Sol*, where other devotees of a more modest class gathered. They were the enemies of Andalusian bull-fighting, genuine *Madrileños*, embittered by the unfair prevalence of *matadores* from Córdoba and Seville, while the capital had not a single glorious representative. The memory of Frascuelo, whom they considered a son of Madrid, was perpetuated in these gatherings like the veneration of a miraculous saint. There were among them some who for many years had not gone to the plaza, not since the Negro retired. Why go? They contented themselves by reading the reviews in the newspapers, convinced that there were no bulls, nor even bull-fighters, since Frascuelo's death — Andalusian boys, nothing else; dancers who made monkey-shines with their capes and bodies without knowing what it was to receive a bull.

Occasionally a breath of hope circulated among them. Madrid was going to have a great *matador*. They had just discovered a bullock fighter, a son of the suburbs, who, after covering himself with glory in the plazas of Vallecas and Tetuán, worked in the great plaza Sundays in cheap bull-fights.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

His name became popular. In the barber-shops in the lesser wards they talked of him with enthusiasm, prophesying great triumphs. The hero went from tavern to tavern drinking and increasing the nucleus of his partisans.

But time passed and their prophecies remained unfulfilled. Either this hero fell with a mortal horn wound, with no other recognition of his glory than four lines in the newspapers, or another subsided after a goring, becoming one of the many tramps who exhibit the *coleta* at the Puerta del Sol, waiting for imaginary contracts. Then the devotees turned their eyes on other beginners, expecting with an Hebraic faith the coming of the *matador* glory to Madrid.

Gallardo dared not go near these tauromachic demagogues who had always hated him and hailed his decadence. The majority of them did not go to see him in the ring, nor did they admire the present-day bull-fighters. They were waiting for their Messiah before deciding to return to the plaza.

When he wandered at nightfall through the centre of Madrid near the Puerta del Sol and Seville Street, he allowed himself to be accosted by the vagabonds of the profession who form groups at these places, boasting of their achievements. They were youths who greeted him as "*maestro*," or "Señor Juan" ; many with a hungry air, leading up to a petition for a few *pesetas*, but well dressed, clean, spick and span, adopting gallant airs, as if they were surfeited with the pleasures of existence, and wearing a scandalous display of brass in rings and imitation chains. Some were honorable fellows who were trying to make their way in tauromachy to maintain their fami-

THE SPANISH LILITH

lies on something more than the workman's daily wage. Others, less scrupulous, had female friends who worked at unmentionable occupations, willing to sacrifice their bodies to support and keep decent some fine fellow, who, to believe his words, would sometime be a celebrity.

Without other belongings than the clothes they wore they strutted from morning till night in the centre of Madrid, talking about the contracts they had not cared to make, and spying on one another to find out who had money and could treat his comrades. When one, by a capricious turn of luck, managed to get a fight of young bullocks in some place in the province, he first had to redeem his glittering costume from a pawn shop — venerable and tarnished garments that had belonged to various heroes of the past.

Among this tauromachic crowd, embittered by misfortune, and kept in obscurity through stupidity or fear, there were men who commanded general respect. One who fled before the bulls was feared for the skill with which he used his knife. Another had been in prison for killing a man with his fist. The famous *Swallow-hats* enjoyed the honors of celebrity since one afternoon when, in a tavern at Vallecas, he ate a Cordovan felt hat torn into pieces and fried, with wine at discretion to make the mouthfuls go down.

Some, suave mannered, always well dressed and freshly shaved, fastened themselves upon Gallardo, accompanying him on his walks in the hope that he would invite them to dine. Others with an arrogant look in their bold eyes entertained the swordsman gayly with the relation of their adventures.

On sunny mornings they went to the Castellana in

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

search of game, when the governesses of the great houses take the children out for an airing. These were English misses or German *frauleins*, who had just come to Madrid with their heads filled with picturesque ideas about this land of legend, and when they saw a young fellow with shaven face and broad hat, they immediately imagined him to be a bull-fighter — a bull-fighter lover — how fine!

“They are girls as insipid as bread without salt, you know, *maestro*. Big feet and hempen hair, but they have their good points, you bet they have! As they scarcely catch on to what one says to them, they’re all smiles, showing their teeth, which are very white. And they open their big eyes wide. They don’t talk Christian but they understand when one makes signs of asking a tip, and as one is a gentleman and is always lucky, they give money for tobacco and other things — and one manages to live. I have three on hand now.”

The speaker boasted of his indefatigable cleverness which absorbed the savings of the governesses.

Others devoted themselves to the foreign women of the music-halls, dancers and singers who came to Spain with the desire of immediately experiencing the joys of having a bull-fighter lover. They were lively French women, with snub noses and straight corsets, so spiritually slender there seemed to be nothing tangible under their perfumed and rustling, cabbage-like, crimped skirts; German girls with solid flesh, heavy, imposing, and blonde as Valkyries; Italians with black, oily hair, with a greenish brown complexion and a tragic air.

The young bull-fighters laughed, recollecting their first private interviews with these devout enthusiasts. The

THE SPANISH LILITH

foreign woman was always afraid of being deceived, dreading to find that her legendary hero was but an ordinary man. Really, was he a bull-fighter? And they looked for his queue, smiling complacently at their wit when they felt the hairy appendage in their fingers, which was equivalent to a certificate of identification.

“You know what these women are, *maestro*. They spend the whole evening kissing and caressing the *coleta*. To entertain them one has to jump up and perform in the middle of the room and explain how bulls are fought, turning over a chair, doing cape-work with a sheet, and lodging *banderillas* with the fingers. Holy Sea! And then, as they are girls who go about the world dragging money out of every Christian that comes near them, they begin their begging in their broken Spanish that even God himself could n’t understand: ‘Bull-fighter sweetheart, wilt thou give me one of thy capes, all embroidered in gold, to wear when I come on to dance?’ You see, *maestro*, how greedy these girls are. As if one bought capes as freely as newspapers. As if one had oceans of them — !”

The young bull-fighter promised the cape with generous arrogance. All bull-fighters are rich. And while the gorgeous gift was on the way, they became more intimate, and the lover asked loans of his friend, who, if she did not have money, pawned a jewel; and he, growing bolder, began helping himself to anything that lay within reach of his hand. When she happened to awaken from her amorous dream, protesting at such liberties, the fine fellow demonstrated the vehemence of his passion and returned the loans to her legendary hero in the form of a beating.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Gallardo enjoyed this tale, particularly when he heard the last part.

"Aha! thou doest well!" he said with savage joy. "Be firm with those girls. Thou knowest them. Thus they love thee more! The worst thing a Christian can do is to humble himself before certain women. Man must make himself respected."

He ingenuously admired the lack of scruple in these youths who lived by levying a contribution on the illusions of passing foreign women, and he pitied himself thinking of his weakness before a certain one.

At sunset, one afternoon, the swordsman on entering Alcalá Street from the Puerta del Sol, stopped, struck by surprise. A blonde lady was getting out of a carriage at the door of the Hotel de Paris. A man who looked like a foreigner gave her his hand, assisting her to alight, and after speaking a few words he drove away while she went into the hotel.

It was Doña Sol. The bull-fighter did not doubt her identity. Neither did he doubt the relations that united her to the foreigner after seeing her glances and the smile with which they said farewell. Thus she used to look at him, thus she used to smile at him in those happy days when they rode together in the deserted fields illuminated by the soft rose-color of the setting sun — "Curse it!"

He spent the evening in ill-humor in the company of some friends; then he slept badly, many scenes of the past being reproduced in his dreams. When he rose the dark and livid light of a gloomy day entered through the balconies. It was raining, the water drops mingled with flakes of snow. Everything was black; the sky, the

THE SPANISH LILITH

walls opposite, a dripping gable within view, the muddy pavement, the roofs of the coaches shining like mirrors, the movable cupolas of the umbrellas.

Eleven o'clock! Should he go to see Doña Sol? Why not! The night before he had put aside this thought with a rush of anger. That would be to humble himself. She had run away from him without any explanation whatever, and later, when she heard of his being wounded unto death, she had scarcely interested herself in his health. A simple telegram at first and nothing more, not even a poor letter of a few lines; she, who with such ease wrote to her friends. No; he would not go to see her. He was very proud.

But the next morning his determination seemed to have softened during the night. "Why not?" he asked himself. He must see her again. For him she was first among all the women he had ever known; she attracted him with a force different from the affection he felt for others. "I have a right to her," the bull-fighter said to himself, realizing his weakness. Ah! how he had felt the violent separation!

The atrocious goring in the plaza of Seville, with the rigor of physical pain, had softened the force of his amorous torment. Illness, and then his tender reinstatement in the good graces of Carmen during convalescence, had made him resigned to his fate. But forget? Never! He had made every effort not to think of the past, but the most insignificant circumstance — passing along a road on which he had galloped with the beautiful Amazon; meeting on the street an English blonde; contact with those young Sevillian gentlemen who were her relatives, all resurrected the image of Doña Sol. Ah,

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

this woman! He would never find another like her. When he lost her, Gallardo believed the decadence of his life had begun. He was no longer the same. He deemed himself many steps lower in social consideration. He even attributed his downfall in his art to this abandonment. When he had her he was more valiant. When the blonde girl fled bad luck had begun for the bull-fighter. If she would return to him, surely the sun of his glory would rise again. His spirit, at times sustained, at others weakened by the mirage of superstition, believed this firmly.

Perhaps his desire to see her might stir again a joyful heart-throb, like that which had often saved him in the ring. Why not? He had great confidence in himself. His easy triumphs with women dazzled by his success made him believe in the irresistible charm of his person. It might be that Doña Sol, seeing him after a long absence — who could tell! The first time they were alone it happened so.

And Gallardo, trusting in his lucky star, with the arrogant tranquillity of a man of fortune, who necessarily must awaken desire wherever his gaze falls, marched over to the Hotel de Paris, which was situated a short distance from his own.

He had to wait more than half an hour subjected to the curious gaze of employees and guests who turned their faces on hearing his name.

A servant invited him to enter the elevator and conducted him to a little *salon* on the next floor from which the Puerta del Sol could be seen with the black roofs of the houses opposite, the pavements concealed beneath the meeting streams of umbrellas, and the shining as-

THE SPANISH LILITH

phalt of the plaza furrowed by swift coaches, which seemed to whip the rain, or by tram cars that crossed in every direction and rang an incessant warning to the foot passengers.

A little door concealed by hangings opened and Doña Sol appeared, amid a rustling of silk, and a sweet perfume of fresh pink flesh, in all the splendor of the summer of her existence.

Gallardo devoured her with his eyes, inspecting her with the exactitude of one who knew her well and did not forget details.

Just as she was in Seville! No — more beautiful, if possible, with the added temptation of a long absence.

She presented herself in elegant abandon, wearing an odd costume with strange jewels, as he first saw her in her house in Seville. Her feet were thrust into slippers covered with heavy gold embroideries which, when she sat down and crossed her limbs, hung loose, ready to fall off her pointed toes. She extended him her hand, smiling with amiable frigidity.

“How are you, Gallardo? I knew you were in Madrid. I have seen you.”

You! She no longer used the *thou* of the great lady, to which he had responded with respectful courtesy as her lover in a class beneath. This *you* that seemed to put them on a level drove the swordsman to despair. He wished to be a kind of serf, elevated by love to the great lady's arms, and he found himself treated with the cold and courteous consideration which an ordinary friend inspires.

She explained that she had attended the only bull-fight Gallardo had given in Madrid and had seen him

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

there. She had gone to see the bulls with a foreigner who desired a glimpse of things Spanish; a friend who accompanied her on her travels but who lived in another hotel.

Gallardo responded to this with an affirmative movement of the head. He remembered the foreigner; he had seen him with her.

The two fell into a long silence, not knowing what to say. Doña Sol was the first to break the pause.

She found the bull-fighter looking well; she vaguely recollected about a great wound he had received; she was almost certain of having telegraphed to Seville, asking for news of him. With the life she lived, with continual change of country and new friendships, her thoughts were in such confusion! But he appeared now as usual, and in the *corrida* he had seemed to her arrogant and strong, although rather unlucky. She did not understand much about bulls. "Was it nothing, that goring?"

Gallardo was irritated by the accent of indifference with which the woman asked the question. And he, when he considered himself between life and death, had thought only of her!

With the gloom of dismay he told her about his being caught, and of his convalescence which had lasted all winter.

She listened to him with feigned interest, while her eyes revealed indifference. The misfortunes of the gladiator were of no importance to her. They were accidents of his trade which could only be of interest to him.

Gallardo, as he spoke of his convalescence at the plantation, thought of the man he and Doña Sol had met together there. "And Plumitas? Do you remember that

THE SPANISH LILITH

poor fellow? He was killed. I don't know whether you heard about it."

Doña Sol also vaguely remembered this. Possibly she had read it in the Paris newspapers, which printed a great deal about the bandit as an interesting type of picturesque Spain.

"Poor man," said Doña Sol with indifference. "I barely recall him as a clownish and uninteresting rustic. At a distance things are seen at their true values. What I do remember is the day he breakfasted with us at the farmhouse."

Gallardo had not forgotten this event. Poor Plumitas! With what emotion he took the flower offered by Doña Sol! Did she not remember?

Doña Sol's eyes showed sincere astonishment.

"Are you sure?" she asked. "Is that so? I swear I remember nothing about it. Ah! that land of the sun! The intoxication of the picturesque! The follies one commits!"

Her exclamations revealed a vague repentance. Then she began to laugh.

"And maybe that poor rustic kept the flower until his last moment; no, Gallardo? Don't tell me he did not. Perhaps no one ever gave him a flower before in all his life. And it is possible also they found that dried flower on his dead body, a mysterious token no one could explain. Don't you know anything about it, Gallardo? Didn't the newspapers mention it? Hush; don't tell me no; don't dispel my illusions. It must have been so; I want it to be so. Poor Plumitas! How interesting! And I had forgotten all about the flower! I will tell my friend, who thinks he will write on things Spanish."

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

The recollection of this friend, who within a few minutes was brought into the conversation for a second time, depressed the bull-fighter.

He sat gazing steadily at the beautiful lady with a tearful melancholy in his Moorish eyes which seemed to implore compassion.

"Doña Sol! Doña Sol!" he murmured with an accent of despair, as if he would reproach her for her cruelty.

"What is it, my friend?" she asked smiling. "What is the matter with you?"

Gallardo kept silence and bowed his head, intimidated by the ironic reflection in those blue eyes, sparkling with their tiny flakes of gold.

After a moment he sat erect as does one who adopts a resolution.

"Where have you been all this time, Doña Sol?"

"Travelling about the world," she answered simply. "I am a bird of passage. In innumerable cities whose very names you do not know."

"And that foreigner who accompanies you now — is — ?"

"He is a friend," she said coldly. "A friend who has had the kindness to accompany me, taking advantage of the opportunity to see Spain; a fine man who bears an illustrious name. From here we go to Andalusia when he gets through seeing the museums. What more do you desire to know?"

In that question, asked with hauteur, an imperious intention of keeping the bull-fighter at a distance was apparent, of establishing social differences between the two. Gallardo was disconcerted.

THE SPANISH LILITH

"Doña Sol!" he moaned with ingenuousness. "God cannot forgive what you have done to me! You have been unkind to me, very unkind. Why did you run away without a word?"

His eyes moistened, he clenched his fists in desperation.

"Don't act so, Gallardo. What I did was a great favor to you. Don't you know me well enough yet? Did you not weary of that affair? If I were a man I would run away from women of my character. The unhappy man who falls in love with me is a suicide."

"But why did you go?" insisted Gallardo.

"I went because I was bored. Do I speak clearly? And when a woman is bored, I believe she has a right to escape in search of new diversions. I am bored to death everywhere; pity me."

"But I love you with all my soul!" exclaimed the bull-fighter with a dramatic and ingenuous expression that would have been ridiculous in another man.

"I love you with all my soul!" repeated Doña Sol imitating his accent and gesture. "And what of that? Ah, these egotistical men, who are applauded by the people and imagine that everything has been created for them. 'I love thee with all my soul and therefore thou must love me also' — But no, *señor*. I do not love you, Gallardo. You are my friend and nothing more. That affair in Seville was a dream, a mad caprice, which I barely recollect and which you should forget."

The bull-fighter rose, drawing near Doña Sol with extended hands. In his ignorance he did not know what to say, divining that his rude words were inefficient to convince that woman. He trusted his desires and hopes

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

to action, with the vehemence of an impulsive man, intending to overpower the woman, to attract her and dispel by contact the chill which separated them.

"Doña Sol!" he supplicated, grasping her hands.

But she, with a simple turn of her agile right hand, disengaged herself from the bull-fighter. A flash of pride and anger darted from her eyes and she bent forward aggressively, as if she had suffered an insult.

"Silence, Gallardo! If you go on thus you will not be my friend and I will show you the door."

The bull-fighter's attitude changed to one of despair; he was humbled and ashamed.

"Don't be a baby," she said. "Why remember what is no longer possible? Why think of me? You have your wife, who, I hear, is pretty and simple; a good companion. And if not she, there are others. Think how many clever girls you can find there in Seville, those who wear the *mantilla*, with flowers in their hair, those that used to please me so much, who would think it a joy to be loved by Gallardo. My infatuation is over. It hurts your pride, being a famous man accustomed to success; but so it is; it's over; friend and nothing more. I am changed. I have become bored and I never retrace my steps. My illusions last but a short time and pass, leaving no trace. I deserve pity, believe me."

She gazed at the bull-fighter with eyes of commiseration, with pitying curiosity, as if she suddenly saw him in all his defects and crudeness.

"I think things that you could not understand," she continued. "You seem to me changed. The Gallardo of Seville was different from the one here. Are you really the same person? I do not doubt it, yet to me you

THE SPANISH LILITH

are a different man. How can I explain it to you? Once I met a rajah in London. Do you know what a rajah is?"

Gallardo negatively shook his head blushing at his ignorance.

"It is an Indian prince."

The old-time ambassadress recalled the Hindoo magnate, his coppery face shaded by a black beard, his enormous white turban with a great dazzling diamond above his forehead and the rest of his body enwrapped in white vestments of thin and innumerable veils, like the petals of a flower.

"He was handsome, he was young, he adored me with the mysterious eyes of an animal of the forest, but he seemed to me ridiculous, and I jested at him every time he stammered one of his Oriental compliments in English. He shook with cold, the fogs made him cough, he moved around like a bird in the rain, waving his veils as if they were wet wings. When he talked to me of love, gazing at me with his moist gazelle-like eyes, I longed to buy him an overcoat and a cap, so that he would not shake any longer. However, I realized that he was handsome and could have been the joy, for quite a few months, of a woman desirous of something extraordinary. It was a question of atmosphere, of scene. You, Gallardo, do you know what that is?"

And Doña Sol remained pensive, recalling the poor rajah always shaking with cold in his absurd vestments amid the foggy light of London. In her imagination she beheld him there in his own country transfigured by the majesty of power and by the light of the sun, his coppery complexion, with the greenish reflexions of the tropical vegetation, taking on a tone of artistic bronze.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

She saw him mounted on his elephant on parade, with long golden hangings that swept the ground, escorted by warlike horsemen and slaves bearing censers with perfumes, his great turban crowned with white feathers set with precious stones, his bosom covered with breast-plates of diamonds, his waist bound by a belt of emeralds, from which hung a golden scimitar; she saw him surrounded by bayaderes with painted eyes and firm breasts, forests of lances, and, in the background, pagodas with multiple roofs one above another, with little bells that chimed mysterious symphonies at the slightest whisper of the breeze; palaces of more mystery; dense thickets in whose shadows leaped and growled ferocious multicolored animals. Ah, atmosphere! Seeing the poor rajah thus, proud as a god, beneath an arid sky of intense blue, and in the splendor of an ardent sun, it would never have occurred to her to present him with an overcoat. It was almost certain that she herself might have fallen into his arms giving herself up as a serf of love.

“ You remind me of the rajah, friend Gallardo. There in Seville, in your native costume, with the lance over your shoulder, you were all right. You were a complement to the landscape. But here! Madrid has become very much Europeanized; it is a city like others. Native costumes are no longer worn. Manila shawls are seldom seen off the stage. Don't be offended, Gallardo; but I don't know why you remind me of the rajah.”

She looked through the windows at the wet ground and the rainy sky, at the scattering flakes of snow, and the crowd that moved with accelerated step under the dripping umbrellas. Then she turned her gaze on the

THE SPANISH LILITH

swordsman, stared strangely at the braid hanging from his head, at the way his hair was combed, at his hat, at all the details that revealed his profession, which contrasted with his elegant and modern costume.

The bull-fighter was — in Doña Sol's opinion — out of his element. Ah, this Madrid; rainy and dismal! Her friend who had come with the illusion of a Spain of eternal blue sky, was disappointed. She herself, seeing on the walk near the hotel the groups of young bull-fighters in gallant attitudes, inevitably thought of exotic animals brought from sunny countries to zoölogical gardens beneath a rainy sky in a gray light. There in Andalusia Gallardo was the hero, the spontaneous product of a cattle country. Here he seemed to her a comedian, with his shaven face and the stage manners of one accustomed to public homage; a comedian who instead of speaking dialogues with his equals awoke the tragic thrill in combat with wild beasts.

Ah! The seductive mirage of the lands of the sun! The deceitful intoxication of light and color! And she had been able to love that rough, uncouth fellow a few months, she had extolled the crudities of his ignorance, and she had even demanded that he should not abandon his habits, that he should smell of bulls and horses, so as not to dispel with perfumes the odors of wild animals that enveloped his person! Ah, atmosphere! To what mad deeds it drives one!

She remembered the danger in which she had stood of being killed by a bull's horns; then the breakfast with a bandit, to whom she had listened speechless with admiration and in the end had given a flower. What nonsense! And how far away it seemed now!

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Nothing remained of this past which caused her to feel repentance for its absurdity except that lusty youth motionless before her with his supplicating eyes and his infantile effort to resurrect those days. Poor man! As if the madness could be repeated when one thinks calmly, and illusion, blind enchantress of life, has vanished!

"It is all over," said the lady. "The past must be forgotten, now that looking back it does not appear in the same colors. What would I not give to have the eyes I used to have! On returning to Spain I find it changed. You also are different. It even seemed to me the other day, seeing you in the plaza, that you were less daring — that the people were less enthusiastic."

She said this simply, without malice, but Gallardo imagined he divined in her voice a trace of mockery; he bowed his head and his cheeks reddened.

"Curse it!" Professional worries surged through his mind. Everything that happened was because he no longer got *close* to the bulls. She had said it plainly. He seemed to her a different man. If he became the Gallardo of former times perhaps she would receive him better. Women love none but the brave.

The bull-fighter deceived himself with these illusions, taking what was a caprice, dead forever, for a momentary aversion that he could conquer by force of prowess.

Doña Sol arose. The call had been long and the bull-fighter did not seem disposed to go; he was content to be near her, vaguely trusting to circumstance to draw them together. But he was obliged to imitate her. She excused herself, pleading an engagement. She was expecting her friend; they were going together to the Prado Gallery.

THE SPANISH LILITH

Then she invited him to breakfast the next morning; a quiet breakfast in her apartments. Her friend would also come. Undoubtedly it would be a pleasure to him to see a bull-fighter at close range. He scarcely spoke Spanish but he would be pleased to meet Gallardo.

The swordsman pressed her hand, answering with incoherent words, and left the room. Fury clouded his vision; his ears buzzed.

Thus she bade him good-bye — coldly, as she would an occasional friend. And that was the same woman he had known in Seville! And she invited him to breakfast with her friend who would amuse himself by examining him close at hand, as if he were a rare beast.

Curse it! He was a brave man. He was done. He would never go to see her again.

CHAPTER XV

BEHIND THE SCENES

JUST at that time Gallardo received several letters from Don José and from Carmen. The manager tried to encourage his *matador*, counselling him to walk straight up to the bulls — “*Zas!* a thrust and thou wilt put him in in thy pocket.” But underlying his enthusiasm a certain depression might be detected, as if his faith were dwindling and he had begun to doubt that Gallardo was “the greatest man in the world.” He knew of the discontent and hostility with which the public received him. The last bull-fight in Madrid disheartened Don José completely. No; Gallardo was not like other swordsmen who went on in spite of public derision, satisfied with earning money. His *matador* had bull-fighter pride and could only show himself in the ring to advantage when received with great enthusiasm.

Don José pretended to understand what ailed his swordsman. Want of courage? Never. He would suffer death before he would recognize this defect in his hero. It was because he was tired, because he was not yet recovered from his goring. “And so,” he advised in all his letters, “it would be better for thee to retire and rest a season. Afterward thou wilt fight again like thine old self.” He offered to arrange everything. A doctor’s certificate was enough to certify his temporary weakness,

BEHIND THE SCENES

and the manager would settle with the plaza impresarios to arrange the pending contracts by sending a *matador* from the beginners' ranks, who would substitute Gallardo for a modest sum. They would still make money by this arrangement.

Carmen was more vehement in her petitions. He must retire immediately; he must "cut his queue." She was more afraid now than in the first years of her married life, when the bull-fights and the fearful suspense seemed to her conditions of existence that destroyed her peace of mind. Her heart told her, with that feminine instinct seldom mistaken in its forebodings, that something grave was going to happen. She scarcely slept; she dreaded the night hours, broken as they were by sanguinary visions. She waxed furious at the public in her letters — a crowd of ingrates who forgot what the bull-fighter had done when he was himself; evil-minded people who wished to see him die for their diversion, as though she did not exist, as though he had no mother. "Juan, *Mamita* and I ask it of thee. Retire. Why go on bull-fighting? We have enough to live on and it pains me to have to see thee insulted by people who are beneath thee. And if another accident should happen — Heavens! — I believe I should go mad."

Gallardo remained thoughtful after reading these letters. Retire! What nonsense! Women's notions! They could say this easily on the impulse of affection, but it was impossible. "Cut his queue" at thirty! How his enemies would laugh! He had no right to retire while his members were sound and he could fight. Such an absurd thing had never happened. Money was not all. How about glory? And professional pride? What

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

would the thousands and thousands of enthusiastic partisans who admired him say of him? What answer would they make to the enemies who threw it in their faces that Gallardo had retired through cowardice?

Moreover, the *matador* stopped to consider whether his fortune would permit this solution. He was rich, and yet he was not. His social position was not established. What he possessed was the work of the early years of his married life, when one of his greatest joys consisted in saving, and in surprising Carmen and the *mamita* with news of fresh acquisitions. Later he had gone on earning money, maybe in greater quantity, but it was wasted and had disappeared through various leaks in his new existence. He had gambled a great deal and had lived a life of splendor. His gambling had caused him to ask loans of various devotees in the provinces. He was rich, but if he retired, thus losing the income of the *corridas* (some years two hundred thousand *pesetas*, others three hundred thousand) he would have to retrench, after paying his debts, by living like a country gentleman off the product of La Rinconada, practising economies and overseeing the estate himself, for up to that time the plantation, abandoned to mercenary hands, had produced almost nothing.

In former times he would have considered himself extremely wealthy with a small part of what he actually possessed. Now he seemed almost a poor man if he gave up bull-fighting. He would have to forego the Havana cigars which he distributed prodigally, and the high-priced Andalusian wines; he would have to curtail the impulses of a *gran señor* and no longer shout in *cafés* and taverns, "It's all paid for!" with the generous impulse of a man accustomed to defy death, which led him

BEHIND THE SCENES

to conduct his life with mad extravagance. He would have to dismiss the troop of parasites and flatterers that swarmed around him, making him laugh with their whining petitions; and when a smart woman of equivocal class came to him (if any would come, after he had retired), he could no longer make her turn pale with emotion by putting into her ears hoops of gold and pearls, nor could he amuse himself by spotting her rich Chinese shawl with wine to surprise her afterwards with a finer one.

So had he lived, and so must he continue to live. He was a bull-fighter of the good old times, such as the people represent a *matador* of bulls to be, liberal, proud, a reveller in scandalous extravagances and quick to succor the unfortunate with princely alms whenever they touched his rude sentiments.

Gallardo jested at many of his companions, bull-fighters of a new kind, vulgar members of the guild of the industry of killing bulls, who journeyed from plaza to plaza like commercial travellers, and were careful and mean in all their expenditures. Some of them, who were almost boys, carried in their pocket an account book of income and expenses, marking down even the five centimes for a glass of water at a station. They only mingled with the rich to accept their attentions and it never occurred to them to treat anybody. Others boiled great pots of coffee at home when the travelling season came on and carried the black liquid with them in bottles, having it reheated, to avoid this expense in hotels. The members of certain *cuadrillas* endured hunger and growled in public about the avarice of their *maestros*.

Gallardo was not tired of his life of splendor. And they wanted him to renounce it!

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Moreover, he thought of the necessities of his own house, where all were accustomed to an easy existence; the full and unembarrassed life of a family which does not count money or worry about its coming in, seeing it drip ceaselessly as from a faucet. Besides his wife and mother, he had taken upon himself another family, his sister, his chattering brother-in-law as idle as though his relationship to a celebrated man gave him the right to vagrancy, and all the troop of little nephews who were growing up and becoming constantly more expensive. He would have to call to an order of economy and parsimony all these people accustomed to live at his cost in merry and open-handed carelessness! And everybody, even poor Garabato, would have to go to the plantation, to parch in the sun and become brutish as rustics! Poor *Mamita* could no longer gladden her last days with pious generosity dispensing money among the needy women in the ward, shrinking like a bashful girl when her son pretended to be angry at finding she had nothing left of the hundred *duros* he had given her two weeks before! Carmen naturally would try to cut down expenses, sacrificing herself first, depriving her existence of many frivolities that made it bright.

"Curse it!" All this meant the degradation of his family — on his account. Gallardo felt ashamed that such a thing might happen. It would be a crime to deprive them after having accustomed them to luxury. And what must he do to avoid it? Simply get *closer* to the bulls; to go on fighting as in former times.

He would get *closer*!

He answered his manager's and Carmen's letters with brief and labored lines that revealed his firm intention. Retire? Never!

BEHIND THE SCENES

He was resolved to be the same as ever, he swore it to Don José. He would follow his advice. "Zas! A thrust, and the beast in his pocket." His courage rose, and he felt equal to taking care of all the bulls in the universe no matter how big they might be.

He was gay toward his wife, although his pride was rather hurt because she doubted his strength. She should hear news after the next *corrida*! He meant to astonish the public to shame it for its injustice. If the bulls were good, he would be like the very Roger de Flor himself!

Good bulls! This was Gallardo's worry. It used to be one of his vanities that he never gave them a thought, and he never went to see them in the plaza before the *corrida*.

"I kill everything they let out to me," he used to say arrogantly. And he beheld the bulls for the first time when he saw them enter the ring.

Now he wished to examine them, to choose them, to prepare for success by a careful study of their condition.

The weather had cleared, the sun shone; the following day the second bull-fight was to take place.

In the afternoon Gallardo went alone to the plaza. The amphitheatre of red brick, with its Moorish windows, stood by itself at the base of green hills. In the background of this broad and monotonous landscape something resembling a distant flock of sheep shone white on the slope of a hill. It was a cemetery.

Seeing the bull-fighter in the vicinity of the plaza some slovenly individuals, parasites of the ring, vagabonds who slept in the stables through charity, living at the cost of devotees and on the leavings of patrons of the nearby taverns, approached him. Some of them had

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

come from Andalusia with a shipment of bulls and hung about in the vicinity of the plaza. Gallardo distributed some coins among these beggars, who followed him cap in hand, and entered the ring through the door of the *Caballerizas*.

In the *corral* he saw a group of devotees watching the *picadores* testing horses. Potaje, with great cowboy spurs on his heels, was grasping a spear, preparing to mount. Those in charge of the stables escorted the manager of the horses, an obese man in a great Andalusian hat, slow of speech, who responded calmly to the insulting and abusive wrangling of the *picadores*.

The "wise monkeys," with arms bared were pulling the hacks by the bridle reins for the riders to try them. For several days they had been riding and training these miserable horses which still bore on their flanks the red gashes of the spurs. They brought them out to trot over the clearings adjacent to the plaza, making them acquire an artificial energy with the iron on their heels and obliging them to make turns to accustom them to running in the ring. They came back to the plaza with their sides dyed with blood, and before entering the stables they received a baptism of several bucketfuls of water. Near the trough not far away the water standing between the stones was dark red, like spilled wine.

The horses destined for the bull-fight the following day were almost dragged out of the stables to be examined and passed upon by the *picadores*. These worn-out remnants of wretched horse-flesh advanced, with tremulous flanks drooping with old age and sickness, a reproach to human ingratitude so forgetful of past serv-

BEHIND THE SCENES

ice. Some were mere skeletons with sharp protruding ribs that seemed about to break through their hairy hide. Others walked proudly, stamping their strong hoofs, their coats shining and their eyes bright; beautiful animals that it was hard to imagine among outcasts destined to death, magnificent beasts that seemed to have been recently unharnessed from a luxurious carriage. These were the most dreaded, for they were horses afflicted with vertigo and other maladies, and behind these specimens of misery and infirmity, rang the sad hoof-beats of steeds past work, mill and factory horses, farm horses, public cab nags, all dulled by years of pulling the plough or the cart, unhappy pariahs who were going to be exploited until the last instant, forced to provide diversion to men with their pawing and springing when the bull's horns gored their shrinking bodies. To mount this miserable horse-herd, tremulous with madness or ready to drop with misery, as much courage was needed as to stand before the bull. Heavy Moorish saddles with high pommel, yellow seat, and cowboy stirrups were thrown upon them, and as they received this weight their legs almost gave way.

Potaje wore a haughty mien in his discussions with the overseer of the horses, speaking for himself and for his comrades, making even the "wise monkeys" laugh with his gypsy-like maledictions. Let the other *picadores* leave it to him to come to an understanding with the horse-traders. Nobody knew better than he how to make these people stand around.

A servant approached him, dragging after him a dejected hack with long hair and ribs in painful relief.

"What art thou bringing there?" said Potaje facing

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

the man. "That can't be received. That's an animal no man alive could mount. Take it to thy mother!"

The phlegmatic contractor answered with grave calmness. If Potaje dared not mount him it was because the *piqueros* now-a-days were afraid of everything. With a horse like this, kind and gentle, Señor Calderón, Trigo, or any of the good-old-time horsemen could have fought bulls two consecutive afternoons without getting a fall and without the animal receiving a scratch. But now! Now there was much fear and very little shame.

The *picador* and the contractor insulted one another with friendly calmness, for among them abusive language lost significance from force of habit.

"What thou art," answered Potaje, "is a freshy, a bigger thief than José María the *Earlybird*. Get out, and let thy bald-headed grandmother that rode on a broom every Saturday at the stroke of twelve get on that raw-boned, hard-gaited beast."

Those present laughed and the contractor merely shrugged his shoulders.

"But what's the matter with that horse?" he said coolly. "Look at him, thou evil soul. Better is he than others that have glanders, or get dizzy and that have thrown thee off over their ears before thou wast even near the bull. He is sounder than an apple, for he has been twenty-eight years in a gas factory doing his duty like a decent person, without ever being found fault with. And now along comest thou, thou street-crier, abusing him with thy 'buts' and thy fault finding, as if he were a bad Christian."

"But I don't want him! Get out! Keep him!"

The contractor slowly approached Potaje, and with

BEHIND THE SCENES

the ease of a man expert in these transactions whispered in his ear. The *picador*, pretending to be offended, finally walked up to the hack. He should n't miss the sale on his account! He did n't want to be taken for an intractable man, capable of injuring a comrade.

Putting a foot in the stirrup he swung the weight of his body upon the poor horse. Then, holding the spear under his arm, he thrust it into a great post embedded in the wall, spearing it several times with tremendous force, as if he had a stout bull at the end of his lance. The poor hack trembled and bent his legs under these shocks.

"He don't turn badly," said Potaje with conciliating tone. "The *penco* is better than I thought. He's got a good mouth, good legs. Thou hast won. Let him be kept."

The *picador* dismounted, disposed to accept anything the contractor offered him after his mysterious "aside."

Gallardo left the group of devotees who had laughingly witnessed this performance. A porter of the plaza went with him to where the bulls were kept. He passed through a little door entering the *corrales*.

A rubble wall that reached the height of a man's neck surrounded the *corral* on three sides, strengthened by heavy posts united to the little upper balcony. Passages so narrow that a man could only go through them side-wise opened at certain distances. Eight bulls were in the spacious *corral*, some lying down, others standing with lowered heads sniffing at the pile of hay before them. The bull-fighter walked the length of these galleries examining the animals. At times he would come outside the barricade, his body looming up through the

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

narrow openings. He waved his arms, giving savage whoops of challenge that stirred the bulls out of their immobility. Some sprang nervously, attacking with lowered head this man who came to disturb the peace of their enclosure. Others stood firm on their legs, waiting with raised heads and threatening mien for the rash being to approach them.

Gallardo, who quickly hid himself again behind the barricades, examined the appearance and character of the wild beasts, without deciding which two he desired to choose.

The plaza overseer was near him; a big athletic man, with leggings and spurs, dressed in coarse cloth and wearing a broad hat held by a chin strap. They had nicknamed him Young Wolf; he was a rough rider who spent the greater part of the year in the open country, coming to Madrid like a savage, with no curiosity to see its streets nor desire to pass beyond the vicinity of the plaza.

To his mind the capital of Spain was a ring with clearings and waste lands in its environs, and beyond these a mysterious series of houses with which he had felt no desire to become acquainted. The most important establishment in Madrid was, in his opinion, Gallina's tavern, situated near the plaza, a pleasant realm of joy; an enchanting palace where he supped and ate at the manager's cost, before returning to the pastures mounted on his steed, with his dark blanket over the pommel, his saddle bags on the croup, and his spear over his shoulder. He rejoiced in terrifying the servants of the tavern with his friendly greetings; terrible hand-clasps that made the bones crack and drew shrieks of terror. He smiled,

BEHIND THE SCENES

proud of his strength and proud to be called "brute," and seated himself before his meal, a plate the size of a dishpan, full of meat and potatoes, besides a jug of wine.

He tended the bulls acquired by the manager, sometimes in the pasture grounds of Muñoz, or, when the heat was excessive, in the meadows among the Guadarramas. He brought them to the enclosure two days before the *corrida*, at midnight, crossing the arroyo Abroñigal, at the outskirts of Madrid, accompanied by horsemen and cowboys. He was in despair when bad weather prevented the bull-fight and the herd had to remain in the plaza, and he could not return immediately to the tranquil solitudes where he pastured the other bulls.

Slow of speech, dull of thought, this centaur who smelled of hide and hay expressed himself with warmth when he talked of his pastoral life herding wild beasts. The sky of Madrid seemed to him narrow and to have fewer stars. He described with picturesque loquacity the nights in the pasture with his bulls sleeping in the diffused light of the firmament and in the dense silence broken only by the mysterious noises from the thickets. The mountain snakes sang with a strange voice in this stillness. They sang, *sí, señor!* No one cared to dispute Young Wolf; he had heard it a thousand times, and to doubt this were to call him a liar, exposing oneself to feel the weight of his heavy hands. And as the reptiles sang, so the bulls talked, only that he had not managed to penetrate all the mysteries of their tongue. They were Christians although they walked on four legs and had horns. It was a fine sight to see them awaken when the morning light appeared. They sprang up joy-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

fully like children; they played, pretending to attack, locking horns; they tried to ride one another with a noisy joy, as if they greeted the presence of the sun which is God's glory. Then he told of his long excursions through the Guadarramas, following the course of the stream of liquid snow that flowed down from the mountain peaks, like transparent crystal, feeding the rivers and the meadows with their herbage dotted with tiny flowers; of the flapping of the wings of the birds that came and perched on the sleeping bulls' horns; of the wolves that howled through the night, ever far away, very far away, as if frightened by the procession of primeval beasts that followed the leader's bell to dispute with them the wild solitude. Let them not talk to him of Madrid, where the people were suffocated! The only acceptable things in this forest of houses were Gallina's wine and his savory stews.

Young Wolf talked to the swordsman and helped him by his advice to choose two animals. The overseer showed neither respect nor wonder in the presence of this famous man, so admired by the people. The bull-herder almost hated the bull-fighter. Kill one of those noble animals, with all kinds of deceptions! A braver man was he who lived among them, passing before their horns in the solitude, without other defence than his arm, and with no applause whatever.

As Gallardo left the *corral* another joined the group, greeting the *maestro* with great respect. He was an old man, charged with the cleanliness of the plaza. He had spent many years in this employment and had known all the famous bull-fighters of his time. He went poorly clad, but frequently women's rings glistened on his fin-

BEHIND THE SCENES

gers, and he blew his nose upon a dainty lace-edged linen handkerchief, which he drew out of the depths of his blouse.

Alone during the week he swept the immense ring, the tiers of seats and the boxes, without complaint as to the magnitude of this task. Whenever the manager found fault and threatened to punish him by opening the door to the vagabonds who idled around outside the plaza, the poor man in desperation promised to mend, so that this unwelcome irruption of scavengers might not cheat him of his spoil. At the most, he admitted half a dozen rogues, bull-fight apprentices, who were faithful to him in exchange for his permitting them on festal days to see the *corrida* from "the dogs' box," a door with a grille situated near the bull-pens, through which the wounded combatants were carried out. These assistants, clutching the iron bars, witnessed the *corrida*, struggling and fighting like monkeys in a cage to occupy the front row.

The old man distributed them skilfully during the week as the cleaning of the plaza progressed. The youngsters worked in the seats in the sun occupied by the poor and dirty public, which leaves in its wake a scrap-heap of orange skins, papers, and cigar stubs.

"Look out for the tobacco," he ordered his troop. "Any one that holds on to a single cigar stub won't see the bull-fight Sunday."

He patiently cleaned the shady side, bending over like a treasure-seeker in the mystery of the boxes to put the findings in his pockets; ladies' fans, rings, handkerchiefs, lost coins, all that an invasion of fourteen thousand persons leaves in its wake. He heaped up the

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

smokers' leavings, mincing the stubs and selling them for pulverized tobacco after exposing them to the sun. The valuables were for a pawnbrokeress who bought these spoils of a public forgetful or overcome by emotion.

Gallardo answered the old man's pleasant greetings by giving him a cigar, and he took leave of Young Wolf. It was agreed with the overseer that he should shut up the two chosen bulls for him. The other swordsmen would not protest. They were boys in good luck, in the flower of their youthful bravery, who killed whatever was put before them.

Going out into the courtyard again where the horse-testing was going on Gallardo saw a man move away from the group of spectators; he was tall, spare, and of a coppery complexion, dressed like a bull-fighter. Beneath his black hat locks of grayish hair fell over his ears, and he was wrinkled around the mouth.

"Pescadero! How art thou?" said Gallardo, pressing his hand with sincere effusion.

He was an old-time swordsman who had had hours of glory in his youth, but whose name few remembered. Other *matadores* coming after had obscured his poor fame, and Pescadero, after fighting bulls in America and suffering various wounds, had retired with a small capital of savings. Gallardo knew that he was the owner of a tavern in the vicinity of the ring where he vegetated far from the devotees and bull-fighters' trade. He did not expect to see him in the plaza, but Pescadero said with a melancholy expression: "What brings me here? Devotion to the game. I seldom come to the bull-fights, but affairs of the trade still attract me, and I come in a

BEHIND THE SCENES

neighborly fashion to see these things. Now I am nothing but a tavern keeper."

Gallardo, contemplating his forlorn appearance, thought of the Pescadero he had known in his youth, one of his most admired heroes, arrogant, favored by the women, a notable figure in Campana Street when he went to Seville, with his velvet hat, his wine-colored jacket, and his silken girdle, leaning on a gold-headed cane. And thus would *he* become, common and forgotten if he retired from bull-fighting.

They discussed professional matters a long time. Pescadero, like all old men embittered by bad luck, was a pessimist. There were no good bull-fighters any more. Only Gallardo and a few others killed bulls in classic style. Even the beasts seemed less powerful. And after these lamentations he insisted on his friend accompanying him to his house. Since they had met, and the *matador* had nothing to do, he must visit his establishment.

Gallardo smiled, and asked about the school of tauromachy established by Pescadero near his tavern.

"What wouldst thou, son!" said the latter apologetically. "One has to help oneself, and the school yields more than all the customers of the tavern. Very good people come, young gentlemen who want to learn so as to shine in bullock-fights, foreigners that grow enthusiastic at the bull-fights and get a crazy notion to become bull-fighters in their old age. I have one taking a lesson now. He comes every afternoon. Thou shalt see."

After taking a glass of wine at the tavern they crossed the street and entered a place surrounded by a high

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

wall. On the boards nailed together, that served as a door, was posted a great bill which announced, "School of Tauromachy."

They entered. The first thing that claimed Gallardo's attention was the bull, an animal made of wood and rushes, mounted on wheels, with a tail of tow, head of braided straw, a section of cork in place of a neck, and a pair of genuine and enormous horns which inspired the pupils with terror.

A bare-breasted youth, wearing a cap and two hanks of hair over his ears, communicated activity to the beast by pushing it when the students stood before it cape in hand.

In the centre of the enclosure a round, corpulent old man with a red face stood in his shirt-sleeves holding an armful of *banderillas*. Near the wall, slouching in one chair and resting her arms on another, was a lady of about the same age and not less voluminous, wearing a beflowered hat. Her florid face, with spots as yellow as chaff, dilated with enthusiasm every time her companion performed a good feat. The roses on her hat, and her false curls of a ridiculous blonde hue, shook with laughter as she applauded.

Standing in the doorway Pescadero explained these people to Gallardo. They must be French, or natives of some other foreign country—he was not sure where they were from nor did it matter to him. They were a married couple who travelled about the world and seemed to have lived everywhere. He had had a thousand trades, to judge from his tales; miner in Africa; colonist in distant isles; hunter of horses with a lasso in the solitudes of America. Now he wished to fight bulls—to

BEHIND THE SCENES

earn money as did the Spaniards; and he attended the school every afternoon, with the determination of a stubborn child, paying generously for his lessons.

"Imagine it; a bull-fighter with that shape and well past fifty years of age!"

When the pupil saw the two men enter, he lowered his arms laden with *banderillas*, and the lady arranged her skirt and flowery hat. Oh, *cher maître!* —

"Good-afternoon *Mosiú*; greetings, *Madame*," said the master, raising his hand to his hat. "Let us see, *Mosiú*, how the lesson is getting on. You know what I have told you. Firm on your ground, you stir up the beast, you let him come on, and when you have him beside you, aim, and put the barbs in his neck. You don't have to worry yourself about anything; the bull will do everything for you. Attention! Are we ready?"

The master moved away, and the pupil faced the terrible bull, or rather the gamin who was behind it, his hands on its hind quarters to push it.

"A-a-a-a! Come on, *Morito!*"

Pescadero gave a frightful bellow to cause the animal to charge, exciting, with yells and with furious stamping on the ground, this animal with entrails of air and rushes, and a head of straw. *Morito* charged like a wild beast, with great clatter of wheels, bobbing his head up and down as he moved, the page who pushed him bringing up the rear. Never could bull of famous breed compare in intelligence with this *Morito*, immortal beast, stuck full of barbs and sword-thrusts thousands of times, suffering no other wounds than such insignificant ones as a carpenter cures. He seemed as wise as man. On drawing near the pupil, he changed his course so as not

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

to touch him with his horns, moving away with the barbs lodged in his cork neck.

An ovation greeted this heroic feat, the *banderillero* remaining firm in his place, arranging the suspenders of his trousers and the cuffs of his shirt.

"Masterful, *Mosiú!*" shouted Pescadero. "That pair is first class!"

The foreigner, moved by the professor's applause, responded with modesty, beating his breast:

"Me got the most important. Courage, *mucho* courage."

Then, to celebrate his deed, he turned to Morito's page, who seemed to lick his lips in anticipation of the order. Let a bottle of wine be fetched. Three empty ones lay on the ground near the lady, who was constantly growing more purple in the face, wriggling in her clothing, greeting her companion's tauromachic exploits with great shouts of laughter.

On learning that he who had just arrived with the teacher was the famous Gallardo, and on recognizing his countenance so often admired by her in the newspapers and on match-boxes, the foreign woman lost color and her eyes grew tender. Oh, *cher maître!* She smiled at him, she rubbed against him, desiring to fall into his arms with all the weight of her voluminous and flabby person.

Glasses were clinked to the glory of the new bull-fighter. Even Morito took part in the feast, the steward who acted as nurse drinking in his name.

"Before two months, *Mosiú,*" said Pescadero, with his Andalusian gravity, "you will be sticking *banderillas* in the plaza of Madrid like the very God himself, and you will have all the applause, all the money, and all the women — with your lady's permission."

BEHIND THE SCENES

The lady, without ceasing to gaze upon Gallardo with tender eyes, was moved with joy, and a noisy laugh shook her waves of fat.

Pescadero accompanied Gallardo down the street.

“*Adios, Juan,*” he said gravely. “Maybe we’ll see each other in the plaza to-morrow. Thou seest what I have come to — to earn my bread by these frauds and clown-tricks.”

Gallardo walked away, thoughtful. Ah! that man whom he had seen throw money around in his good times with the arrogance of a prince, sure of his future! He had lost his savings in bad speculations. A bull-fighter’s life was not one in which to learn the management of a fortune. And yet they proposed that *he* retire from his profession! Never.

He must get *close* to the bulls!

3278

CHAPTER XVI

"THE GREATEST MAN IN THE WORLD"

DURING the whole night one dominant thought floated over the dark lake of Gallardo's dreams. He must get *close*! And the next morning the resolution was firmly rooted in his mind. He *would* get close, and astound the public by his brave deeds. Such was his mettle that he went to the plaza free from the superstitious fears of former times. He felt the certainty of triumph, the presentiment of his glorious afternoons.

The *corrida* was unlucky from the start. The first bull "came in fighting," furiously attacking the men on horseback. In an instant he had thrown the three *picadores* who awaited him lance in socket, and two of the hacks, lay dying, streams of dark blood gushing from their perforated chests. The other horse ran across the plaza, mad with pain and surprise. The bull, attracted by this race, ran after him, and lowering his powerful head beneath his belly, raised him on his horns and threw him on the ground, venting his rage on the poor broken and punctured hulk. As the wild beast left it kicking and dying, a *mono sabio* approached to finish it, burying his dagger blade in the crown of his head. The wretched hack showed the fury of a lion in his death struggles and bit the man, who gave a scream and shook his bleeding right hand, pressing on the dagger until the horse ceased kicking and lay with rigid limbs. Other plaza

“GREATEST MAN IN THE WORLD”

employees came running from all directions with great baskets of sand to throw in heaps over the pools of blood and the dead bodies of the horses.

The public was on its feet, gesticulating and vociferating. It was filled with enthusiasm by the bull's fierceness and protested because there was not a *picador* in the ring, shouting in chorus: "Horses, horses!"

Everybody knew they would come in immediately, but it infuriated them to have an interval pass without new carnage. The bull stood alone in the centre of the ring proud and bellowing, raising his blood-stained horns, the ribbons of the emblem on his lacerated neck fluttering in the breeze.

New horsemen appeared and the repugnant spectacle was repeated. The *picador* had barely approached with spear held in advance, reining his horse to one side so that the bandaged eye would prevent his seeing the bull, when the shock and fall were instantaneous. Javelins broke with the cracking sound of dry wood; the gored horse was raised on the powerful horns; blood spouted; bits of hide and flesh fell after the shock of mortal combat; the *picador* rolled along the sand like a yellow-legged puppet and was immediately covered by the attendants' capes.

The public hailed the riders' noisy falls with shouting and laughter. The arena resounded with the shock of their heavy bodies and their iron-covered legs. Some fell backwards like stuffed sacks, and their heads, as they encountered the boards of the barricade, awoke a dismal echo.

"He'll never get up again," shouted the people. "He must have busted his melon."

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

But he did get up again; he extended his arms, scratched his head, recovered his heavy beaver hat lost in the fall, and remounted the same horse which the *monos sabios* forced upon its feet with pushes and blows. The gay horseman urged his steed into a trot, and astride the agonized wreck rode to meet the wild beast again.

"Good for you!" he shouted, throwing his hat at a group of friends.

No sooner did he stand before the bull, thrusting his lance into the neck, than man and horse rose on high, the two immediately falling apart from the violence of the shock, and rolling in different directions. Again, before the bull attacked, the *monos sabios* and some of the audience warned the horseman. "Dismount!" But before his rigid legs would allow him to do so, the horse fell flat, instantly dead, and the *picador* was hurled over his ears his head striking the arena with a resounding thud.

The bull's horns never managed to gore the riders, but those lying on the ground apparently lifeless were carried by the *peones* to the infirmary to have their broken bones set or to be resuscitated from deathlike unconsciousness.

Gallardo, eager to attract the sympathy of the audience, hurried from place to place; he received great applause at one time for pulling a bull's tail to save a *picador* who lay on the ground at the point of being gored.

While the *banderillas* were being placed, Gallardo leaned against the barrier and gazed along the boxes. Doña Sol must be in one of them. At last he saw her, but without her white *mantilla*, without anything to remind him of that Sevillian lady dressed like one of Goya's *majas*. One might think her, with her blonde hair and her novel and elegant hat, one of those foreign women

“GREATEST MAN IN THE WORLD”

attending a bull-fight for the first time. At her side was the friend, that man of whom she talked with admiration and to whom she was showing the interesting features of the country. Ah, Doña Sol! Soon she should see of what mettle was the brave youth she had abandoned! She would have to applaud him in the presence of the hated stranger; she would be transported and moved against her will by the enthusiasm of the audience.

When the moment arrived for Gallardo to kill his first bull, the second on the programme, the public received him kindly as if it had forgotten its anger at the previous bull-fight. The two weeks of suspension on account of the rain seemed to have produced great tolerance in the multitude. They were willing to find everything acceptable in a *corrida* so long awaited. Besides, the fierceness of the bulls and the great mortality of horses had put the public in a good humor.

Gallardo strode up to the bull, his head uncovered after his salutation, with the *muleta* held before him, and swinging his sword like a cane. Behind him, although at a prudent distance, followed Nacional and another bull-fighter. A few voices from the rows of seats protested. “How many acolytes!” It resembled a parish priest going to a funeral.

“Stand aside, everybody!” shouted Gallardo.

The two *peones* paused, because he said it as if he meant it, with an accent that left no room for doubt.

He strode ahead until near the wild beast, and there he unrolled his *muleta*, making a few passes more like those of his old times, until he thrust the rag near the drivelling muzzle. “A good play! Hurrah!” A murmur of satisfaction ran along the tiers of seats. The

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

bull-fighter of Seville had redeemed his name; he had bull-fighter pride! He was going to do some of his own feats, as in his better days. His *pases de muleta* were accompanied by noisy exclamations of enthusiasm, while his partisans became reanimated and rebuked their enemies. What did they think of that? Gallardo was careless sometimes—they knew that—but any afternoon when he wished—!

That was one of the good afternoons. When he saw the bull standing with motionless fore-feet, the public itself fired him with its advice. “Now! Thrust!”

Gallardo threw himself against the wild beast with the sword presented, but rapidly moved away from the danger of the horns.

Applause arose, but it was short; a threatening murmur cut by strident hisses followed. The enthusiasts ceased looking at the bull to face the rest of the public with indignation. What injustice! What lack of knowledge! He had started in at the killing well enough—

But the enemies pointed to the bull derisively persisting in their protests, and the whole plaza joined in a deafening explosion of hisses. The sword had penetrated obliquely—passing through the bull’s body, its point appearing through one side, near his fore-leg. The people gesticulated and waved their arms with roars of indignation. What a scandal! Even a bad bullock-fighter would not make such a stroke as that!

The animal, with the hilt of the sword in his neck, and the point protruding through the joint of his fore-leg, began to limp, his enormous mass quivering with the movement of his unsteady tread. This spectacle seemed to move the audience with generous indignation. Poor

“GREATEST MAN IN THE WORLD”

bull! So good; so noble. Some leaned forward, raging with fury, as if they would throw themselves head foremost into the ring. Thief — son of a thief! To thus martyrize an animal that was better than he. And all shouted with impetuous sympathy for the animal's suffering, as if they had not paid their money to witness his death.

Gallardo, astounded at his act, bowed his head beneath the storm of insults and threats. “Cursed be the luck.” He had started in to kill just as in his better epoch, dominating the nervous feeling that forced him to turn away his face as if he could not bear the sight of the wild beast that charged him. But desire to avoid danger, to immediately escape from between the horns, had caused him to lose his luck again with that stupid and scandalous thrust.

The people on the tiers of seats stirred restlessly with the fervor of numerous disputes. “He does n't understand. He turns away his face. He has made a fool of himself.” Gallardo's partisans excused their idol, but with less fervency. “That might happen to anybody. It is a misfortune. The important thing is to start in to kill with spirit as he does.”

The bull, after running and limping with painful steps which made the crowd howl with indignation, stood motionless, so as not to prolong his martyrdom.

Gallardo grasped another sword, walked up and faced the bull.

The public divined his task. He must finish him by pricking him in the base of the brain; the only thing he could do after his crime.

He held the point of the sword between the two horns,

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

while with the other hand he shook the *muleta* so that the animal, attracted by the rag, would lower his head to the ground. He pressed on the sword, and the bull, feeling himself wounded, tossed his head throwing out the instrument.

"One!" shouted the multitude with mocking unanimity.

The *matador* repeated his play and again drove in the sword, making the wild beast shudder.

"Two!" they sang mockingly from the bleachers.

He tried again to touch the vulnerable spot with no other result than a bellow of pain from the animal, tortured by this martyrdom.

"Three!"

Hisses and shouts of protest were united to this ironic chorus on the part of the public. When was that fool going to get through?

Finally he succeeded in touching with the point of his sword the beginning of the spinal cord, the centre of life, and the bull fell instantly, lying on his side with rigid legs.

The swordsman wiped the sweat off his brow and began his return to the president's box with slow step, breathing heavily. At last he was free of that animal. He had thought he would never finish. The public received him with sarcasms as he passed, or with disdainful silence. None applauded. He saluted the president in the midst of general indifference, and took refuge behind the barrier, like a pupil shamed by his faults. While Garabato offered him a glass of water, the *matador* looked at the boxes, meeting the eyes of Doña Sol which had followed him into his retreat. What must that woman

“GREATEST MAN IN THE WORLD”

think of him! How she and her friend would laugh on seeing him insulted by the public! What a damnable idea of that lady to come to the bull-fight!

He remained between barriers avoiding all fatigue until the next bull he was to kill should be let out. His wounded leg pained him on account of his having run so much. He was no longer himself; he knew it now. His arrogance and his resolve to get *closer* resulted in nothing. His legs were no longer swift and sure as in former times, nor had his right arm that daring that made him extend it fearlessly, eager to reach the bull's neck without delay. Now it bent disobedient to his will, with the blind instinct of certain animals that shrink and hide their faces, thinking thus to avoid danger.

His old-time superstitions suddenly awoke, terrifying and obsessing him.

“I feel that something is going to happen,” thought Gallardo. “My heart tells me that the fifth bull will catch me—he'll catch me—there is no escape.”

However, when the fifth bull came out, the first thing he met was Gallardo's cape. What an animal! He seemed different from the one he had chosen in the *corral* the day before. Surely they had changed the order in regard to letting out the bulls. Fear kept ringing in the bull-fighter's ears. “Bad sign! He'll catch me; I'll go out of the ring to-day foot foremost.”

In spite of this he kept on fighting the wild beast and drawing it away from *picadores* in danger. At first his feats were received in silence. Then the public, softening, applauded him mildly. When it came time for the death-stroke and Gallardo squared himself before the wild beast, every one seemed to divine the confusion of

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

his mind. He moved as if disconcerted; the bull no sooner tossed his head than, taking the attitude for an advance, he stepped back, receding by great springs, while the public greeted these attempts at flight with a chorus of jests.

“Ouch! Ouch! He’ll catch thee!”

Suddenly, as if he wished to end it by any means, he threw himself upon the animal with the sword, but obliquely, so as to escape from danger as soon as possible. An explosion of hisses and voices! The sword was embedded but a few inches, and after vibrating in the wild beast’s neck, was shaken out and hurled far away.

Gallardo took his sword again and approached the bull. He squared himself to go in to kill and the wild beast charged at the same instant. He longed to flee but his legs no longer had the agility of other times. He was struck and rolled over from the shock. Aid came, and Gallardo arose covered with dirt, with a great rent in the seat of his trousers through which his white underclothing escaped, and minus a slipper and the *moña* which adorned his queue.

The arrogant youth whom the public had so much admired for his elegance, presented a pitiful and absurd appearance with his clothes awry, his hair disarranged, his *coleta* fallen and undone like a limp tail.

Several capes were mercifully extended around him to aid and shield him. The other bull-fighters, with generous comradeship, even prepared the bull so that he could finish with it quickly. But Gallardo seemed blind and deaf; no sooner did he see the animal than he stepped back at his lightest charges, as if the recent upsetting had

“GREATEST MAN IN THE WORLD”

maddened him with fear. He did not understand what his comrades said to him, but, with his face intensely pale, and frowning as though to concentrate his mind, he stammered, not knowing what he said:

“Stand aside, everybody! Leave me alone!”

Meanwhile fear kept singing through his brain: “To-day thou diest. To-day is thy last going.”

The public divined the swordsman’s thought from his confused movements.

“The bull makes him sick. He has become afraid!”

Even Gallardo’s most fervent partisans kept silent through shame, unable to explain this occurrence never before seen.

The people seemed to revel in his terror, with the undaunted courage of those who are in a place of safety. Others, thinking of their money, shouted against this man who let himself be ruled by the instinct of self-preservation, defrauding them of their joy. A robbery! Vile people insulted the swordsman, expressing doubt as to his sex. Odium had brought to light and spread abroad, after many years of adulation, certain memories of the bull-fighter’s youth, forgotten even by himself. They recalled his nocturnal life with the vagabonds on the Alameda of Hercules. They laughed at his torn breeches and at the white clothing that escaped through the rent.

“If thou couldst see thyself!” shouted shrill voices, with feminine accent.

Gallardo, protected by his companions’ capes, took advantage of all the bull’s distractions to wound him with his sword, deaf to the mocking of the public.

He dealt thrusts that the animal barely felt. His ter-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

ror at being caught lengthened his arm and caused him to stand at a distance, wounding only with the point of the sword.

Some blades were scarcely embedded in the flesh, and fell; others remained lodged in bone but were uncovered in their greater length, vibrating with the movements of the bull which walked with lowered head, following the contour of the wall, bellowing as if with weariness at the useless torment. The swordsman followed him, *muleta* in hand, eager to finish him, yet fearful of exposing himself, and behind came the whole troop of assistants moving their capes as if they wished to induce the animal by the waving of their rags to bend his legs and lie down.

The bull's journey about the ring close to the barrier, his muzzle drivelling, his neck bristling with swords, provoked an explosion of mockery and insult.

"It is the *Via Dolorosa*," they said.

Others compared the animal to a cushion full of pins. Thief! Miserable bull-puncher!

Some, more vile, persisted in their insults to Gallardo's sex, changing his name.

"Juanita, don't get lost!"

A long time passed and a part of the public, wishing to discharge its fury against something higher than the bull-fighter, turned towards the presidential box. "*Señor Presidente!*" How long was this scandal going to last?

The president made a sign that quieted the protestants and gave an order. A minor official with his plumed shovel-hat and floating cape was seen to run along behind the barrier until he stood near the bull. There, turning to Gallardo, he held out his hand, with

“GREATEST MAN IN THE WORLD”

his index finger raised. The public applauded. It was the first notice. If the bull was not killed before the third, he would be returned to the *corral*, leaving the swordsman under the stain of the greatest dishonor.

Gallardo, as if awakening from his dream, terrified at this threat, raised his sword and threw himself upon the bull. Another thrust that barely penetrated the bull's body.

The swordsman let fall his arms in dejection. Surely the beast was immortal. Sword-thrusts made no impression on him. It seemed as if he would never fall.

The inefficiency of the last stroke infuriated the public. Every one rose to his feet. The hisses were deafening, obliging the women to cover their ears. Many waved their arms, bending forward, as if they wished to hurl themselves into the plaza. Oranges, bread crusts, seat cushions, flew into the ring like swift projectiles aimed at the *matador*. Stentorian voices rose from the seats in the sun, roars like those of a steam siren, which it seemed incredible should be produced by the human throat. From time to time a deafening clamor of bells pealed forth with furious strokes. A derisive chorus near the bull pens chanted the *gorigori* of the dead.

Many turned towards the president. When would the second notice be given? Gallardo wiped off the sweat with his handkerchief, gazing in all directions as if surprised at the injustice of the public, and making the bull responsible for all that occurred. At that moment his eyes rested on Doña Sol's box. She turned her back so as not to see the ring; perhaps she felt pity for him; perhaps she was ashamed of her condescensions in the past.

Again he threw himself upon the animal to kill, but

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

few could see what he did, for he was hidden by the open capes hung continually about him. The bull fell, a stream of blood gushing out of his mouth.

At last! The public became less restless, ceasing to gesticulate, but the shouts and hisses continued. The beast was finished by the *puntillero*; the swords were drawn out, he was harnessed by the head to a team of mules and dragged from the ring, leaving a broad belt of smoothed earth and pools of blood which the attendants obliterated with the rake and baskets of sand.

Gallardo hid himself between barriers, fleeing from the insulting protests which his presence raised. There he remained, tired and panting for breath, with his leg aching, but in the midst of his dejection feeling satisfaction at being free from danger. He had not died on the wild beast's horns, but he owed his safety to his prudence. Ah, the public! A multitude of assassins that hankers for a man's death as if they alone made good use of life and had a family.

His departure from the plaza was sad, behind the crowd that filled the environs of the ring, the carriages, the automobiles, the long rows of tram-cars.

His coach rolled along slowly to avoid driving over the groups of spectators coming out of the plaza. These separated to let the mules pass, but as they recognized the swordsman they seemed to repent their amiability. In the movement of their lips Gallardo read tremendous insults. Other carriages in which rode handsome women in white *mantillas* passed near his. Some turned their heads so as not to see the bull-fighter; others looked on him with eyes of pitying commiseration.

The *matador* shrank as if he wished to pass unnoticed.

“GREATEST MAN IN THE WORLD”

He hid behind the corpulence of Nacional who rode silent and frowning.

A crowd of boys following the carriage broke out into hisses. Many who were standing on the sidewalks imitated them, thinking thus to avenge themselves for their poverty, which had compelled them to remain outside the plaza the whole afternoon in a vain hope of seeing something.

The news of Gallardo's failure had circulated among them and they insulted him, glad to humiliate a man who earned enormous riches.

This outburst aroused the swordsman from the mute resignation into which he had fallen.

“Curse it! But why do they hiss? Have they been at the bull-fight? Have they paid out their money?”

A stone struck against a wheel of the coach. The vagabonds were shouting at the very steps, but two guards rode up on horse-back and quelled the disturbance, afterward escorting all the way up Alcalá Street the famous Juan Gallardo — “the greatest man in the world.”

CHAPTER XVII

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

THE *cuadrillas* had just entered the ring when loud blows were heard on the door of the *Caballerizas*.

A plaza employee approached it shouting with ill-humor. Nobody entered there; they must go to another door. But an insistent voice answered him from without, and he opened it.

A man and a woman entered; he wearing a white Cor-dovan hat, she dressed in black and with a *mantilla* over her head.

The man grasped the employee's hand, leaving something in it that humanized his fierce aspect.

"You know me, don't you?" said the newcomer. "Really, don't you know me? I am Gallardo's brother-in-law and this lady is his wife."

Carmen gazed all around the abandoned courtyard. In the distance, behind the thick brick walls, sounded music, and the respiration of the multitude could be felt, broken by shouts of enthusiasm and murmurs of curiosity. The *cuadrillas* were defiling before the president.

"Where is he?" anxiously inquired Carmen.

"Where should he be, woman?" replied the brother-in-law brusquely. "In the plaza, doing his duty. It is madness to have come; nonsense. Oh, this weak character of mine!"

Carmen continued gazing about her, but with a cer-

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

tain indecision, as if repentant for having come there. What was she to do?

The employee moved by Antonio's hand pressure, or by the relationship of those two persons to the *matador* of fame, became obsequious. If the lady wished to await the termination of the bull-fight, she might rest at the *concièrge's* house. If they chose to see the *corrida*, he could get them a good place, although they had no tickets.

Carmen shuddered at this proposition. See the bull-fight? No. She had come to the plaza by an effort of her will, and she regretted it. It was impossible for her to endure the sight of her husband in the ring. She had never seen him fighting bulls. She would wait there until she could bear it no longer.

"God help me!" said the leather-worker with resignation. "We will stay, though I don't know what we shall do here in front of the stables."

Encarnación's husband had been following after his sister-in-law since the day before, putting up with her hysteria and tears of nervousness excited by fear.

Saturday at midday Carmen had talked to him in her husband's office. She was going to Madrid! She was determined on taking this journey. She could not live in Seville. She had spent a week of insomnia, seeing horrible visions. Her feminine instinct warned her of some great danger. She must rush to Juan's side. She did not know why, nor what she could accomplish by the journey, but she longed to be near Gallardo, with that affectionate desire that believes it can minimize danger by being close to the person beloved.

This was not living! She had learned through the

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

daily papers about Juan's bad luck the Sunday before in the Plaza of Madrid. She understood bull-fighter professional pride. She guessed that he would not tolerate this misfortune with resignation. He would do mad deeds to reconquer the applause of the public. The last letter she had received from him gave her to understand it vaguely.

"Yes, yes!" she said energetically to her brother-in-law, "I am going to Madrid this very afternoon. If thou wishest, thou mayest accompany me; if thou dost not wish to come, I will go alone. Above all — not a word to Don José; he would prevent the trip. No one knows about it but *Mamita*."

The leather-worker accepted. A free trip to Madrid, although in such sad company! On the way, Carmen gave expression to her fears. She would talk to her husband forcefully. Why continue fighting bulls? Had they not enough to live on? He must retire, and immediately; if not, she would die. This *corrida* must be the last. Even this one seemed more than she could bear. She would arrive in Madrid in time to prevent her husband working that afternoon. Her heart told her that by her presence she would prevent a great calamity. But her brother-in-law protested in consternation on hearing this.

"What barbarity! What women are! They get an idea in the head, and things must be so. Dost thou believe, then, that there is no authority, nor laws, nor rules of the plaza, and that it is enough for a woman to take a notion to embrace her husband when she gets frightened, to suspend a *corrida* and leave the public with its thumb on its nose? Thou mayest say what thou wilt

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

to Juan, but it must be after the bull-fight. Authority can't be played with; we would all go to jail."

The leather-worker imagined the most dramatic consequences if Carmen persisted in her absurd idea of presenting herself to her husband in order to prevent his bull-fighting. They would all be locked up. He already saw himself in prison as an accomplice to this act which in his simplicity he considered a crime.

When they reached Madrid he had to make renewed efforts to prevent his companion from rushing to the hotel where her husband was. What good would that do?

"Thou wilt confuse him by thy presence and he will go to the plaza in a bad humor, excited, and if anything happens to him 'the fault will be thine."

This idea subdued Carmen and caused her to follow her brother-in-law's advice. She allowed herself to be taken to a hotel of his selection, and she remained there all the morning lying on a sofa in her room, weeping as if she were sure of coming adversity. The leather-worker, happy to be in Madrid, well housed, waxed indignant against this despair which seemed to him absurd.

"Man alive! What women are! Any one would think thou art a widow, while thy husband is at this very moment getting ready for the *corrida* hale and hearty as Roger de Flor himself. What nonsense!"

Carmen scarcely ate any breakfast, deaf to the praises her brother-in-law rendered the cook of the establishment. In the afternoon her resignation vanished again.

The hotel was situated near the Puerta del Sol and the noise and stir of the people going to the bull-fight reached her. No, she could not stay in that strange room while

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

her husband risked his life. She must see him. She lacked courage to witness the spectacle, but she longed to be near him; she must go to the plaza. Where was the plaza? She had never seen it. If she could not enter, she would wander around its environs. The important thing was to feel herself near, believing that by this proximity she could influence Gallardo's luck.

The leather-worker protested. By the life of —! He intended to see the bull-fight; he had gone out and bought a ticket and now Carmen spoiled his pleasure by her determination to go to the plaza.

"But what wilt thou do there, girl? What wilt thou better by thy presence? Imagine if Juaniyo should chance to see thee."

They argued long, but the woman answered all his reasoning with the same firm reply:

"Thou needst not accompany me; I will go alone."

The brother-in-law at last surrendered and they rode to the plaza in a hired coach. The leather-worker remembered a great deal about the amphitheatre and its dependencies from having accompanied Gallardo on one of his trips to Madrid for the spring bull-fights.

He and the employee were undecided and ill humored in the presence of this woman with reddened eyes and sunken cheeks who stood planted in the courtyard uncertain what to do. The two men felt themselves drawn by the murmur of the crowd and the music that rose from the plaza. Must they stand there the whole afternoon and not see the bull-fight?

The employee had a brilliant inspiration.

If the lady wished to pass into the chapel —

The defiling of the *cuadrillas* was over. Some horsemen

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

came trotting out of the door that gave access to the ring. They were *picadores* who were not on duty and were retiring from the arena to substitute their companions when their turn came. Hitched to some rings in the wall stood a row of six saddled horses, the first that must enter the plaza to supply those fallen. Behind them the lancers passed the time making evolutions with their steeds. A stable boy mounted a skittish wild mare and galloped her along the *corral* to tire her, and then turned her over to the *piqueros*.

The hacks, tortured by the flies, stamped their feet, pulling on the rings as if they divined the coming danger. The other horses trotted, urged on by the riders' spurs.

Carmen and her brother-in-law had to take refuge under the arcades, and finally the bull-fighter's wife accepted the invitation to pass into the chapel. It was a safe and tranquil place and there she could do something useful for her husband.

When she entered the sacred room with its atmosphere made dense by the respiration of the public that had witnessed the bull-fighters' prayers, Carmen gazed upon the poverty of the altar. Four lights were burning before the Virgin of the Dove, but this tribute seemed niggardly to her.

She opened her purse to give a *duro* to an employee. Could he not bring more tapers? The man scratched his head. Tapers? Tapers? He did not believe he could find any among the chattels belonging to the plaza. But he suddenly recalled to mind the sisters of a *matador* who brought candles whenever he fought bulls. Maybe they were not all gone, and there might be a few in some

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

corner of the chapel. After a long search he found them. There were no candlesticks, but the employee, a man of resources, brought a couple of empty bottles, and sticking the candles into their necks, he lit them and placed them near the other lights.

Carmen had knelt and the two men took advantage of her immobility to rush to the plaza, eager to witness the first events of the *corrida*.

The woman remained lost in contemplation of the crude image reddened by the lights. She was not familiar with this Virgin, but she must be sweet and kind like the one in Seville to whom she had so often made supplication. Moreover, she was the Virgin of the bull-fighters, she heard their last prayers when danger near at hand gave sincere piety to those rough men. On that floor her husband had knelt many times. And this thought was enough to cause her to feel attracted to the image and to contemplate her with religious trust, as if she had known her since childhood.

Her lips moved, repeating the supplications with automatic haste, but her thoughts fled away from prayer, as if drawn by the noises of the multitude that reached her.

Ah! that intermittent volcano-like bellowing, that roar of distant waves, broken from time to time by pauses of tragic silence! Carmen imagined herself witnessing the invisible bull-fight. She divined by the variations in the sounds from the plaza the progress of the tragedy that was taking place within the ring. Sometimes there was an explosion of angry shouts with accompaniment of hisses; again thousands and thousands of voices uttered unintelligible words. Suddenly rose a shriek of

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

terror, prolonged, shrill, that seemed to rise to heaven; a fearful and halting exclamation that brought to mind thousands of heads in a row, blanched by emotion, following the swift race of a bull in pursuit of a man — until it was suddenly broken by a shout, re-establishing calm. The danger had passed.

There were long intervals of silence; a silence absolute; the silence of the void, in which the buzzing of the flies hovering around the horses was magnified, as though the immense amphitheatre were deserted, as though the fourteen thousand persons seated on its surrounding seats had become motionless and breathless, and Carmen were the only living being that existed within its heart.

Suddenly this silence was animated by a loud and indescribable shock as though every brick in the plaza were loosened from its place and all were dashing against one another. It was the prolonged applause that made the ring tremble. In the nearby courtyard sounded blows of the rod on the hide of the wretched horses, blasphemy, clatter of hoofs, and voices. "Whose turn?" New lancers were called into the plaza.

To these noises others nearer were added. Footsteps sounded in the adjoining rooms, doors opened suddenly, voices and labored breathing of several men were heard, as if they walked burdened by great weight.

"It is nothing — a bruise. Thou'rt not bleeding. Before the *corrida* is over thou'lt be lancing again."

A hoarse voice, weakened by pain, groaned between gasps with an accent that reminded Carmen of home:

"Virgin of Solitude! I must have broken something. Look well, doctor. Alas, my children!"

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Carmen shuddered with horror. She raised her eyes that had wandered in fear to the Virgin. Her nose seemed drawn out by her emotion to a sharp point between sunken and pallid cheeks. She felt sick; she feared that she would fall to the floor in a faint from terror. She tried to pray again, to isolate herself in prayer; to not hear the noises from without, transmitted through the walls with a tone of despair. But in spite of her a dismal sound reached her ear of sponges being wet in water and voices of men who must be doctors and nurses stimulating the *picador*, who complained with the energy of a mountaineer, at the same time striving to hide the pain of his broken bones through manly pride.

“Virgin of Solitude! My children! What will the poor babes have to eat if their father cannot use the lance?”

Carmen arose. Ah, she could bear no more! She would fall fainting if she remained in that gloomy place trembling at the echoes of pain. She thought she felt in her own bones the same torture that caused that unknown man to groan.

She went out into the courtyard. Blood on all sides; blood on the floor and around some casks where water mingled with the red fluid.

The *picadores* were retiring from the ring. The sign for the display of the *banderillas* had been given, and the riders came out on their bleeding horses. They dismounted, talking with animation of the incidents of the bull-fight. Carmen saw Potaje let his vigorous person down off his horse hurling a string of curses at the *mono sabio* who stupidly assisted him in his descent. He seemed benumbed by his hidden iron greaves and from the pain

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

of several violent falls. He raised one hand to his back to ease himself with painful stretches, but he smiled, showing his yellow horse-like teeth.

"Have ye seen how well Juan does to-day?" he said to those who surrounded him. "To-day he surely is all right."

Seeing a solitary woman in the courtyard, and recognizing her, he showed no surprise.

"You here, Señá' Carmen? How good!"

He spoke tranquilly, as if he, in the stupor which wine and his own bestiality kept him, could not be surprised by anything in the world.

"Have you seen Juan?" he continued. "He laid down on the ground before the bull, under his very nose. Nobody else can do what that fellow does. Peep in and see him, for he is very fine to-day."

Some one called him from the door of the infirmary. His companion, the *picador*, wanted to speak to him before being taken to the hospital.

"Adio', Señá' Carmen. I must see what that poor fellow wants. A fall with a fracture, they say. He won't use the lance again this whole season."

Carmen took refuge under the arcades and closed her eyes to the repugnant spectacle in the courtyard, yet at the same time fascinated by the sickening sight of the blood.

The *monos sabios* led in the wounded horses by the bridle reins. A stable boy, seeing them, began to bestir himself, in a fever of activity.

"Courage, brave boys!" he shouted, addressing the youths with the horses. "Firm! Firm there!"

A stable-boy carefully approached a horse that was

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

struggling in pain, took off his saddle, fastened leather straps around his legs, binding the four extremities, and threw the animal to the ground.

"There, there! Firm! Firm with him!" the one in charge of the horses continued shouting, without ceasing his activity.

Another held the reins of the fallen animal and pressed his poor head against the ground by placing his foot on it. The nose contracted with distortions of pain, the long yellow teeth gritted with a chill of martyrdom, his stifled whinnies lost in the dust from the pressure of the foot. The gory hands of the others worked to return the flaccid entrails to the open cavity of the abdomen or stuffed it with handfuls of tow while still others, with a skill acquired by practice, sewed up the hide.

When the horse was "fixed" with barbaric promptness, they threw a bucket of water over his head, loosed his feet from the straps and gave him several blows with a rod to make him stand up. Some, after walking barely two steps, fell flat, shedding a stream of blood from the wound stitched with pack-thread. It was instantaneous death. Others were kept alive by some marvellous resource of animal vigor, and the lackeys, after this "fixing," took them to the "varnishing," inundating their feet and bellies with strong ablutions from casks of water. The white or chestnut color of the animals became glossy and the hair dripped a rose-colored liquid, a mixture of water and blood. The horses were patched up as if they were old shoes; their waning strength was exploited to the last breath, prolonging their agony and death. The important thing was to keep these animals on their feet a few minutes longer, until the *picadores*

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

could get into the plaza again; the bull would take charge of finishing the work.

Carmen wished to go. Virgin of Hope! What was she doing there? She did not know the order the *matadores* were to follow in their work. Maybe that last trumpet-blast signalled the moment in which her husband would stand before the wild beast. And she there, a few steps from him, and not seeing him! She wished to escape, to free herself from this torment.

Moreover, the blood that ran through the courtyard, and the torment of those poor beasts, caused her the greatest anguish. Her womanly delicacy rebelled against these tortures, while she held her handkerchief to her nostrils to stifle the slaughter-house odors.

She had never been to a bull-fight. A great part of her existence had been spent hearing conversation about bulls, but in the tales of these sports she saw only the external, what all the world saw, the events in the ring, in the light of the sun, with glitter of silks and embroideries and the ostentatious spectacle, without realizing the odious preparations that took place in the mystery of the wings. And they lived off this "sport," with its repugnant martyrdom of guiltless animals; and their fortune had been made at the cost of such spectacles!

A loud applause broke out within the ring. Orders were issued in the courtyard with imperious voice. The first bull had just died. The barricade at the end of the passage that communicated with the ring was opened and the noises of the multitude and the echoes of the music were borne in with more intensity.

The mules were in the plaza; one team to collect the dead horses, another to drag out the bull's carcass.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Carmen saw her brother-in-law coming along the arcades. He was still tremulous with enthusiasm over what he had seen.

"Juan — colossal! This afternoon as he never was before! Fear not. Why, that boy eats the bulls up alive!"

Then he glanced at her uneasily, fearful that she would make him lose so interesting an afternoon. What did she decide? Did she think she had the courage to peep into the plaza?

"Take me away!" she said with an agonized accent. "Get me out of here quickly. I am sick. Leave me in the first church we can find."

The leather-worker made a wry face. By the life of Roger — ! Leave such a magnificent bull-fight! And as they walked toward the door he was calculating where he could abandon Carmen so as to immediately return to the plaza.

When the second bull came in, Gallardo, still leaning against the barrier, was receiving felicitations from his admirers. What courage that boy had — "when he wished." The whole plaza had applauded the first bull, forgetting their anger at the former *corridas*. When a *picador* fell and lay senseless from the terrible shock, Gallardo had rushed up with his cape, drawing the wild beast into the centre of the ring. He made some bold *verónicas* that at last held the bull motionless and exhausted, after turning from the lure of the red rag. The bull-fighter, taking advantage of the animal's stupefaction, stood erect within a few steps of his muzzle, thrusting his body forward as if in challenge. He felt the heart-throbbing, that happy precursor of his great daring. He must conquer

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

the public with a dash of audacity, and he knelt before the horns with a certain precaution, ready to arise at the slightest sign of charging.

The bull stood quiet. Gallardo reached out a hand until he touched the drivelling muzzle and the animal made no movement whatever. Then he dared something that held the public in palpitating silence. Slowly he laid himself down on the sand, with the cape between his arms serving as a pillow, and thus he remained some seconds lying beneath the nose of the bull who sniffed him with a kind of fear, as if he suspected danger in this body that audaciously placed itself beneath his horns.

When the bull, recovering his aggressive fierceness, lowered his horns, the bull-fighter rolled toward his feet, in this way putting himself out of his reach, and the animal passed over him, vainly seeking in his ferocious blindness the bulk that attacked him.

Gallardo rose brushing off the dust, and the public, which adored feats of daring, applauded him with the old-time enthusiasm. It hailed not alone his audacity, it applauded itself, admiring its own majesty, guessing that the bull-fighter's daring was to reconcile himself with it, to regain its affection. Gallardo came to the *corrida* disposed to the most daring deeds to reconquer applause.

"He is careless," they said on the tiers of seats, "often he is slack; but he has bull-fighter pride and he is going to redeem his name."

But the enthusiasm of the public, their gay excitement over Gallardo's achievement, and the true sword-thrust with which the other *matador* had killed the first bull, turned to ill-humor and protest as they saw the second

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

in the ring. He was enormous and of beautiful build, but he ran through the centre of the arena looking with surprise at the noisy multitude on the bleachers, frightened at the voices and hisses that were meant to excite him, fleeing from his own shadow, as if he divined all kinds of intrigue. The *peones* ran, waving the cape at him. He charged at the red rag, following it some instants, but suddenly he gave a snort of surprise and, turning his hind quarters, fled in the opposite direction with violent springs. His eagerness for flight infuriated the public.

"That's no bull—it's a monkey."

The swordsmen's capes finally managed to attract it toward the barrier, where the *picadores* waited motionless on their mounts, with lance under arm. He approached a rider with lowered head and with fierce snorts as if to charge. But before the iron could be lodged in his neck, he gave a spring and ran, passing through the capes the *peones* waved at him. In his flight he met another lancer and repeated the springing, the snorting and the flight. Then he met the third horseman, who, thrusting forward his lance, speared him in the neck, by this punishment only augmenting his fear and his speed.

The public had risen to its feet *en masse*, gesticulating and shouting. A tame bull! What an abomination! Every one turned toward the president roaring his protest. "*Señor Presidente!*" That could not be allowed.

A chorus of voices that repeated the same words with monotonous intonation began to rise from some sections.

"Fire! Fi-i-ire!"

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

The president seemed to hesitate. The bull was running, followed by the combatants, who chased after him, their capes over their arms. When any of these managed to head him off, or to stop him, he smelt the cloth with the usual snort and ran in a different direction, jumping and kicking.

The noisy protest against these flights increased. "*Señor Presidente!*" Was his lordship deaf? Bottles, oranges, and seat cushions began to fall into the ring around the fugitive animal. The public hated it for its cowardice. One bottle struck on one of the horns and the people applauded this true shot though not knowing who it was. Many of the audience leaned forward as if about to throw themselves into the ring to destroy the bad beast with their hands. What a scandal! To see in the plaza of Madrid oxen that were only fit for meat! "Fire! Fire!"

At last the president waved a red handkerchief and a salvo of applause greeted this signal.

The fire *banderillas* were an extraordinary sight; something unexpected, that augmented the interest of the *corrida*. Many who had protested until they were hoarse felt inward satisfaction at this incident. They were going to see the bull roasted alive, running mad with terror at the fire-streams that would be hanging from his neck.

Nacional advanced carrying, hanging from his hands, with the points downward, two thick *banderillas* that seemed to be encased in black paper. He went toward the bull without great precaution, as if his cowardice merited no art whatever, and he lodged the infernal barbs to the accompaniment of the vengeful applause of the multitude.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

There was a crackling sound as if something broke and two spirals of white smoke began to blaze on the animal's neck. In the light of the sun the fire could not be seen, but the hair singed and disappeared and a black mark extended around the neck. The bull ran, surprised at the attack, accelerating his flight as though thus to free himself from torment, until suddenly detonations like gunshots began to burst on his neck, the burning embers of paper flying around his eyes. The animal sprang aloft, filled with terror, his four feet in the air at once, vainly twisting his horned head to pull out with his mouth those demons clutched upon his neck. The people laughed and applauded, thinking his springs and contortions funny. It seemed as if, with his strong heavy body, he were executing a trained animal's dance.

"How they sting him," they exclaimed, with ferocious laughter.

The *banderillas* ceased crackling and bursting. His carbonized neck was covered with blisters of fat. The bull, no longer feeling the burning of the fire, stood motionless, breathing hard, his head lowered, thrusting out his dry dark-red tongue.

Another *banderillero* approached him and put in a second pair. The smoke spirals rose again above the charred flesh, the shots resounded and the bull ran madly, trying to reach his neck with his mouth by twisting his massive body; but now his movements were less violent, as though the vigorous animal began to habituate itself to martyrdom.

Still a third pair was lodged, and his neck became carbonized, shedding through the ring a nauseating odor of melted grease, burnt hide, and hair consumed by fire.

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

The public continued applauding with vengeful frenzy, as though the gentle animal were an adversary of their beliefs and they did a pious deed in burning him. They laughed when they saw him tremulous on his legs, moving his flanks like the sides of a bellows, lowing with a shrieking howl of pain, his eyes reddened, and dragging his tongue over the sand, greedy for a sensation of coolness.

Gallardo, leaning against the barrier, near the president's box, awaited the sign to kill. Garabato had the sword and *muleta* ready on the edge of the wall.

"Curse it!" The bull-fight had begun so well, and for bad luck to reserve this bull for him, the one he himself had chosen on account of its fine appearance, but which now that it trod the arena turned out to be tame!

He excused himself in advance for defective work, talking with the "intelligent" who occupied seats near the barrier.

"What can be done will be done—and no more," he said, shrugging his shoulders.

Then he turned toward the boxes, gazing at Doña Sol's. She had applauded him before, when he achieved his stupendous feat of lying down before the bull. Her gloved hands clapped with enthusiasm when he turned toward the barrier, bowing to the public. When Doña Sol saw that the bull-fighter was looking at her, she bowed to him with an affectionate manner, and even her companion, despicable fool! had joined this salutation with a stiff inclination of the body as if he were going to break off at the waist. Afterward he had several times surprised her glasses directed persistently at him, seeking him out in his retirement between barriers. That *gachí!*

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Perhaps she felt re-attracted to him. Gallardo decided to call on her next day, to see if the wind had changed.

The signal to kill was given and the swordsman, after a short speech, strode up to the animal.

His admirers shouted advice.

"Despatch him quick! He is an ox that deserves nothing."

The bull-fighter held his *muleta* before the animal, which charged, but with a slow step made cautious by torture, with a manifest intention of crushing, of wounding, as if martyrdom had awakened all his ferocity. That man was the first object which had placed itself before his horns since the torture.

The multitude felt its vengeful animosity against the bull vanish. He did not recover himself badly; he charged. *Olé!* And all hailed the *pases de muleta* with enthusiasm, including combatant and wild beast in common approbation.

The bull stood motionless, lowering his head, with his tongue protruding. Silence, the forerunner of the mortal thrust, fell; a silence greater than that of absolute solitude, product of many thousands of bated breaths; silence so intense that the faintest sound in the ring carried to the most distant seats. All heard a slight clashing of sticks striking against each other. It was the sound made when Gallardo with the point of his sword laid back over the bull's neck the charred shafts of the *banderillas* that rested between the horns. After this arrangement to facilitate the blow, the multitude thrust their heads still farther forward, responsive to the mysterious correspondence that had just been established

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

between its will and that of the *matador*. "Now!" He was going to fell the bull with a masterful stroke. All divined the swordsman's resolution.

Gallardo threw himself upon the bull and the whole audience breathed hard in unison after the nerve-straining pause. The animal drew away from the encounter, running, bellowing with fury, while the rows of seats burst out into hisses and protests. As usual! Gallardo had turned away his face and bent his arm at the moment of killing. The animal bore in his neck the loose and wavering sword, and after taking a few steps the steel blade sprang out of the flesh and rolled on the sand.

Part of the public rebuked Gallardo. The charm that had united the swordsman to the multitude at the beginning of the feast was broken. Lack of confidence reappeared; criticism of the bull-fighter spread. All seemed to have forgotten the enthusiasm of a short time before.

Gallardo recovered his sword and with bowed head, lacking spirit to protest at the ingratitude of a multitude tolerant to others, inflexible with him, strode up to the bull again.

In his confusion he thought he saw a bull-fighter place himself at his side. It must be Nacional.

"Be calm, Juan! Don't get rattled."

"Damn it!" Must the same thing always happen to him? Could he no longer thrust his arm between the horns, as in other times, burying the sword to the hilt? Was he to spend the rest of his life making audiences laugh? An ox which they had had to set on fire!

He placed himself before the animal, which seemed to await him, his legs motionless as if he wished to put an

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

end immediately to his long torture. He would not make more passes with the *muleta*. He squared himself, the red rag held near the ground, the sword horizontal at the height of his eyes. Now for the stroke!

The audience rose to its feet with a sudden impulse. For some seconds man and beast formed but a single mass and thus moved a few steps. The most intelligent raised their hands ready to applaud. He had thrown himself to kill as in his better days. A master stroke!

But suddenly the man emerged from between the horns hurled like a projectile by a powerful toss of the bull's head, and rolled along the sand. The bull lowered his head and his horns hooked up the body, raising it from the ground an instant and letting it fall, to continue on his race, bearing in his neck the blade of the sword, embedded to the cross!

Gallardo slowly raised himself and the plaza burst forth into a deafening applause, eager to repair its injustice. Hurrah! Good for the bull-fighter of Seville! He had done well!

But the bull-fighter did not respond to these exclamations of enthusiasm. He put his hands on his abdomen, bent over in an attitude of pain, and took a few hesitating steps with lowered head. Twice he raised it and looked toward the door of exit—as if he feared he could not find it, staggering blindly as though intoxicated.

Suddenly he fell upon the sand—contracted like an enormous worm of silk and gold. Four *mozos* of the plaza slowly lifted him up until they raised him on their shoulders. Nacional joined the group holding the swordsman's ghastly head with its glassy eyes showing through their half-closed lashes.

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

The public made a movement of surprise, ceasing their applause. Every one gazed about, undecided as to the gravity of the event. But suddenly optimistic news circulated, coming from no one knew where; that anonymous opinion, which all heed and which at certain moments fires a multitude or causes it to remain motionless. It was nothing. A wound in the abdomen that deprived him of his senses. No one had seen blood.

The crowd, suddenly tranquillized, began to be seated again, turning its attention from the wounded bull-fighter to the wild beast, which was still on its feet, resisting the agonies of death.

Nacional helped to place his *maestro* on a bed in the infirmary. He fell on it like a sack, inanimate, his arms hanging outside the couch.

Sebastián, though he had often seen his *maestro* wounded and bleeding, and had kept his serenity in spite of it, now felt an agony of fear, seeing him inert and of a greenish white color, as if he were dead.

“By the life of the blue dove!” he moaned. “Are there no doctors? Is there nobody here?”

The man in charge of the hospital, after sending away the mangled *picador*, had rushed back to his box in the plaza.

The *banderillero* was in despair; the seconds seemed hours; he screamed to Garabato and to Potaje who had followed after him, not sure what he was trying to tell them.

Two doctors came and after closing the door so that no one could disturb them, they stood undecided before the swordsman's inanimate body. He must be undressed. Garabato began to unbutton, rip, and tear the bull-fight-

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

er's clothing, by the light that entered through a window in the ceiling.

Nacional could hardly see the body. The doctors stood around the wounded man, consulting each other with significant glances. It must be a collapse that had apparently deprived him of life. No blood was seen. The rents in his clothing were the effect, no doubt, of the tumbling the bull had given him.

Doctor Ruiz entered hastily and his colleagues made way for him, respecting his skill. He swore in his nervous precipitation while he began to assist Garabato to open the bull-fighter's clothing.

There was a movement of astonishment, of painful surprise, around the bed. The *banderillero* dared not inquire. He looked between the heads of the doctors and saw Gallardo's body with the shirt raised above his breast. The naked abdomen was gashed by a tortuous aperture like bleeding lips, through which appeared patches of bright blue.

Doctor Ruiz sadly shook his head. Besides the atrocious and incurable wound, the bull-fighter had received a tremendous shock from the bull's tossing. He did not breathe.

"Doctor — doctor!" cried the *banderillero*, begging to know the truth.

Doctor Ruiz, after a long silence, shook his head again.

"It is all over, Sebastián. Thou must seek another *matador*."

Nacional raised his eyes aloft. Thus to end a man like that, unable to press the hand of his friends, without a word, suddenly, like a miserable rabbit struck in the neck!

THE ATONEMENT OF BLOOD

In despair he left the infirmary. Ah, he could not see that! He was not like Potaje who stood quiet and frowning at the foot of the bed, contemplating the body as though he did not see it, while he twirled his beaver hat in his fingers.

He was about to cry like a child. His breast heaved with anguish, and his eyes filled with tears.

He had to make way through the courtyard to give passage to the *picadores* who were entering the ring again.

The terrible news began to circulate through the plaza. Gallardo was dead! Some doubted the truth of the information; others accepted it; still no one moved from his seat. The third bull was soon to come in. The *corrida* had not yet reached its first half, and there was no reason for abandoning it.

Through the door of the ring came the murmur of the multitude and the sound of music.

The *banderillero* felt a fierce hatred born within him for all that surrounded him; an aversion to his profession and to the public that supported it. In his memory danced the sonorous words with which he had made the people laugh, finding in them now a new expression of justice.

He thought of the bull which was at that moment being dragged out of the arena, its neck burned and blood-stained, its legs rigid, and its glassy eyes staring at blue space as do those of the dead.

Then in imagination he saw the friend who lay but a few steps away from him on the other side of a brick wall, also motionless and stiff, his breast bare, his abdomen torn open, a glazed and mysterious brilliancy between his half-closed lashes.

THE BLOOD OF THE ARENA

Poor bull! Poor *matador*!

Suddenly the murmuring amphitheatre burst forth into a bellowing, hailing the continuation of the spectacle. Nacional closed his eyes and clenched his fists.

It was the bellowing of the wild beast, the real and only one!

THE END

P. 386

MAN!

Date Due

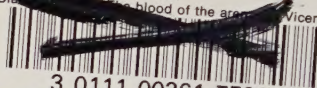
[illegible]

PQ6603
.L2 S22
1911

95287

ST. OLAF COLLEGE
PG6603 L2 S22 1911

Black ... the blood of the ... Vicent



3 0111 00261 7529